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THE VANISHING MEN.

Sharp Detectives Baffled---A Mystery of the Air---Playing at the Hazardous Game of Life and Death.

By MARO ROLFE,

Author of "The Cave of the Sphere," "The Wooden Indian's Widow," Etc.

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CHAPTER I.
MYSTERIOUS UBIQUITY.

"The most mysterious disappearance in all my experience!" exclaimed Toncray Siddons.

"I never knew anything like it," assented Stanley Dill. "The man is certainly not in that building, and I don't understand how he could have got out."

"Yet we saw him go in plainly enough."

"Yes, and were within twenty feet of him when he entered that room," added Dill.

"That adds to the mystery," continued Siddons. "We went into the room not more than half a minute after he did. The room has no door except the one by which he and we entered; it has no closet or hiding place; there is no trap door in the floor, and there is only one window, and that is nine stories above the ground, and there is no fire escape near it; and yet Ralston Sprague is not in that room. He has evaporated. He could not have disappeared more completely."

"That is the situation exactly," murmured Dill. "Yet the man did not evaporate or disappear in any supernatural manner. This thing recalls his unexplained success in eluding us in the Great western building three weeks ago, though at that time we were not pegging him so closely."

"Oh, and at that time, as now, we thought we had him caged in a room from which he could not get away. He was not in the room, though we knew he had gone into it, and though we searched it thoroughly we could discover no means by which he could have left it without jumping down far enough to kill him. This discourages me a little. At this rate how are we ever to unravel the mystery of the death of Branford Murrie?"

Stanley Dill and Toncray Siddons were detectives. The celebrated case of Branford Murrie had been entrusted to them. They had sought long and earnestly to solve its mystery, but had been balked at many points.

They were convinced that Ralston Sprague was a man they wanted, though what, as they had supposed, cornered him repeatedly, he had escaped away and left no clue as to how he had come out there or whither he had gone. In each instance they had been obliged to begin the quest anew.

On this night they had been certain of success.

But Ralston Sprague had triumphed again.

The conversation that has been recorded tells the story completely, as far as they knew and understood it, of their last and present discomfiture.

Stanley Dill looked at his watch and shut it with an impatient snap.

"It is now twelve-ten," he said. "I suppose there is nothing for us to tarry here for."

"Let us wait half an hour," answered Siddons. "We have nowhere else to go and we may discover something."

They waited, but they were disappointed.

No discoveries rewarded their patience. How Ralston Sprague got out of that room was a mystery still.

They walked rapidly back to their office, not two blocks away.

Scarcely had they entered when someone rang them up. Dill went to the 'phone. When he learned who was talking to him he started, and half-turning, said to Siddons:

"It is Marston."

"Then it must be something important," replied Toncray Siddons. "Be sure you get him right."

"Impossible!"

Dill replied thus, and waited in evident excitement for what more was to follow.

"It cannot be," he said. "He could not have got there except by walking a considerable distance, and he was pretty near here about thirty-five minutes ago."

Then, after a moment:

"Positively it is impossible. I saw the man myself, and so did Siddons."

"And so did I," was the answer, "and I know he was Ralston Sprague, and no one else."

"Well," answered Dill, "we will come over there. Wait for us."

Then the detective turned to his associate.

"Siddons," he said, "Marston says he saw Ralston Sprague at Watterson and McLean streets fifteen minutes ago."

"That could not be. He could not have got there."

"So I said, but Marston is positive. He says he followed Sprague into a private residence and Sprague went to an attic with only a single window and has gone down and disappeared as quickly and mysteriously as we know he did from the National Bank building a little while ago. That was only a quarter of an hour after we lost him, and he could not have got to Watterson and McLean streets at that time with the fastest horses in town."

"There is some mistake about this," answered Siddons. "Of course, we will go out there, as you proposed to Marston. But all this is too incredible."

"I'll be right with you," said Dill, going into a private office. Scarcely was Siddons alone, when the telephone bell rang again.

Toncray Siddons answered and waited.

"Ah!" he thought, "this is something worth hearing. Amsdell would not be using the wire at this time of night for nothing."

He listened, interrupting the speaker with denials and many expressions of incredulity.

At he dropped the receiver he was joined by Stanley Dill.

"Dill," he said, half breathlessly, "Amsdell is in Arcanum, about three miles from Watterson and McLean streets, and five miles from here, and he declares Ralston Sprague was there four or five minutes ago. He says he saw him into a church and disappeared."

CHAPTER II.
THE MEN WHO WENT UP.

The two detectives were confronted by a strange condition, or they were wonderfully misinformed by men in whom they had learned to repose the utmost confidence.

Marston and Amsdell were detectives of long experience. They knew Ralston Sprague so well that it seemed hardly possible either of them could make any mistake as to his identity, yet what they stated as most positive facts appeared to Dill and Siddons, when they put them together, which neither Marston nor Amsdell had had any opportunity to do, to make up a statement which was so palpably against reason and probability that it was nothing short of impossible of belief.

Dill telephoned Amsdell to meet Siddons, Marston and himself at Watterson and McLean streets. Then the two detectives took a carriage for that point.

They found Marston considerably excited. The story that he told was only an elaboration of the telephone message his principals had received, but it filled Dill and Siddons with wonder.

"Come with me," he said, as he finished, "and I will show you the house and room."

"Wait until Amsdell comes," answered Dill. Then he told Marston of the message Amsdell had sent almost simultaneously with Marston's. Before he had done, Amsdell came in.

He repeated his strange story and marveled at the inexperience of Dill and Siddons and Marston.

"It passes all understanding," he commented. "Every one of the four men know Ralston Sprague beyond the power of a doubt, and within no brief a time that it would have been impossible for him to have traveled from point to point by any known means of locomotion, we have seen him in three places tonight and he has mysteriously disappeared at each place in some inexplicable manner."

"That's it," said Dill. "Come, we will go and see where Marston lost him."

Marston led them to an old dwelling on the opposite side of the street and tapped on the door.

An old woman answered.

"I want to take these men upstairs," he said.

"Oh, yes!" answered the old woman, holding the candle with which she had lighted herself to the door high enough to permit its light to fall distinctly on Marston's face; "you're the man that went up and came down."

"What do you mean?" asked Marston. "Is there anything remarkable in the fact that I came down after I went up?"

The old woman grinned.

"Well," she said, "that other man that went up ahead of you didn't come down, did he?"

"Not as I could ascertain," was Marston's wondering answer.

"So, so! Well, none of 'em do."

"None of whom? Who are you talking about?"

"The men that go up."

"And they never come down---never?",

"There's only one room left," remarked the clerk.

"You're the first one in two years."

"Isn't they stay up there, then?" Dill asked.

"I can't find 'em there."

"Do many go up?" asked Siddons.

"Sometimes a few, sometimes not so many."

"How many each day?" Marston asked.

"Oh, not so many as that; sometimes one, sometimes two or three a week."

"Always the same ones?"

"Two or three come often. Others have come here only once or twice as I know. Sometimes I hear them going up in the night and don't get them."

"How many has this been going on?" inquired Marston, eagerly.

"Why say—I've been here two years. I'm poor and rent's cheap in this house and the landlord says pay no attention to the men who go up and says they'll not molest me, and they never do."

"Do you control the attic floor?" questioned Dill.

"Only the basement and first floor. The second floor is full of old furniture and all kinds of stuff. The front door and stairway and top floor are always unlocked."

"Do any men go up during the day?" asked Siddons.

"Only at night."

"And you're sure they never come down, are you?" said Marston.

"I'm sure there's no one that ever did."

They asked some more questions, but elicited no further information.

An inspection of the upper part of the old house revealed what Mrs. Tonerary had described the attic correctly. It had but one window. That was in the gable at the rear. It had but one door, and that opened upon the stairway. The window was thirty feet above the ground to the basement. There was no ladder, fire escape, or other available means by which any man could leave the room and get outdoors except by the stairs and the doors on the first floor and in the basement.

"You said Master Ralston Sprague came into this room, I followed him. He did not even fasten the door. When I entered he was gone."

"There must be some closet here," suggested Sandell.

Dill shook his head and Siddons looked around. They had had much experience of their own that they could not explain satisfactorily.

Sandell looked about carefully.

"No," he said, "there is no closet, and if there one it would not be large enough so many men as the old woman says have come up here."

Marston tapped his forehead with his finger.

"Perhaps she is," said Dill, thoughtfully. "I think I would go daily myself after 10 years of this mysterious business. Now, as the trail breaks off here, we must take it up at the church of Saint Adam."

In half an hour they approached the church and saw a man letting himself in by the main entrance.

CHAPTER III.

THE MAN IN THE SPIRE.

It was evident that the man who was going into the church had not noticed the approach of the four detectives, who had left their carriage round the corner.

As soon as the door closed behind him, the four sprang forward. Dill was ahead and was surprised, not displeased, to discover that the door was unlocked.

He and Siddons drew a man about to enter a room at the rear of the building. An electric light was outside, close by.

"Who are you?" asked the detective. "What are you doing here?"

"I am the janitor," was the reply.

"Perhaps it is the sexton or the pastor," suggested Siddons.

"If he is," answered Dill, "he will give an account of himself and ask us to do the same."

Then he said again:

"Who are you? What do you want here?"

The man laughed mockingly and passed out of sight into the rear room.

"I have it," exclaimed Stanley Dill; "I'm going to follow that chap and see what his game is if I can."

"Do you think you can get shot," admonished Siddons. "Better let me go with you."

"Well, come on if you want to. Marston, you and Sandell will remain here and intercept that man if he tries to leave the church. Two of you had better look to the front, the other to the rear of the building."

As he ceased speaking he entered the room into the darkness of which the man they wished to question disappeared, and was followed closely by Tonerary Siddons.

Together these men had braved many dangers, seen and unseen. Neither knew fear and they did not know now.

They could see nothing inside the room, but their entrance was greeted with a derisive laugh from a distant corner.

Siddons plunged his hand in an outside pocket of his sack coat and another in the bosom of his vest. When he drew forth the latter it held a small incandescent electric light fed from a battery in his coat pocket, operated with his other hand.

At that instant both men stopped Dill standing beside him, revolver ready for use.

The two had walked into a vestibule of the church was not there.

The two detectives looked at each other blankly.

"I listen!" exclaimed Dill, in a low, tense whisper.

They heard footsteps ascending stairs.

They were in the rear corner of the room, and it was closed.

"There," whispered Siddons.

Dill nodded and jerked the door open. A flight of common stairs, battered and unpainted, arose from their very feet.

Siddons flashed the electric light above their heads and Dill uttered a low cry.

A man was far above them, ascending the steps as rapidly as he could.

They could see a succession of small landings, and the stairs appeared to extend up, up, almost interminably.

"This goes up to the top of the spire inside," muttered Dill.

"Good," exclaimed Siddons. "Then he can't get away, and the further up he goes the worse he will be off. But he may be on the shoot and he has us at a disadvantage if that is so."

"We'll have to take our chances. Come on, but hide the light except when it is actually needed," said Dill, doggedly; "there is one thing certain, he's going up there in the spire he can't disappear and we're bound to overtake him in time, I guess."

They had not gone far when it became evident that they had reached a landing. Siddons flooded the place with light.

The landing was not more than five feet square. There were no doors more than four feet wide. There was a rude, but substantial, railing on each side.

About forty feet above them they saw the man they were pursuing ascending stairs, but evidently paying no heed to his pursuers.

"Cover him with your revolver, Dill," whispered Siddons, "and I will put the light out so he will not conceive that he is hit."

"Too risky," said Dill; "he might shoot first. Let's try strategy."

"How?"

"Capital," answered Siddons. "That will be a good way to size him up a bit."

Dill's plan was simple, but never ready themselves in thirty seconds. Then Dill shouted:

"Stop! Stop, up there, I say!"

A laugh was the only reply.

They waited and there was no shot.

Dill pushed his hat out into the light and Siddons expected to see a bullet in the spire to fire at it, but he made no warning demonstration. On the contrary they could plainly hear him going further up the stairs. He paused once, but never missed a step and did not rest when he came to a landing.

"Well," said Dill, "that fellow don't mean fight. Flash on him once more and then I'll call to him to stop again."

Tonerary Siddons did as he was directed. The light revealed the whole interior of the spire.

The man was gone!

CHAPTER IV.

VANISHING OF RALSTON SPRAGUE.

When Dill and Siddons rejoined Arundell and Marston they found that the mystery of the man of mystery had pursued up the spire. Marston, however, felt sure he might have been following a ghost. It was the impression he was dealing with the supernatural, but because the disappearance of Ralston Sprague was real, he did not appear to be susceptible of explanation on any creditable hypothesis.

"Its of a piece with the disappearance of Ralston Sprague from the National Bank building, from the corner of Monroe street and McLean streets and from this church, and with the disappearance of the man who, that old woman insisted, have been haunting her house for some months past. It's just one of the whole series of mysteries that began when we lost Sprague in the bank. Gentlemen, we have the ghosts gone now."

And Dill paused thoughtfully and the four detectives looked questioningly, each at his fellow.

"I don't believe there's anything about this business that we can't find out sooner or later," Siddons said, "and we will find it out I think we'll be on to one of the most important cases of the century. There don't appear to be anything to regard as a mystery here. Let's investigate."

They hastened back down town as fast as horses could carry them.

The four separated and Dill set out alone for his lodgings, the three others going their various ways to their own homes or to when they should meet and what each could have to report.

Dill had not gone far alone when he felt a hand on his right arm.

"Mr. Dill, I believe," said a voice.

Dill turned quickly, grasping his revolver as he did so.

"Ralston Sprague!" he exclaimed, as he gazed into his face. It was a pale, haggard face, upon which was plainly visible in the light of the street lamp near the corner.

"The same," replied the other, coolly. "You don't need your gun, Mr. Dill. I mean you no harm. Do you want me?"

"I have been looking for you," answered Dill.

"Why not take me now then? There is no time so good as the present."

Dill hesitated. Something of the man was a surprise to Dill. It surpassed anything in the way of bravado that he had ever seen.

In an instant he was thoroughly himself. This was the man he was after, and he knew it. He thrust his revolver against Sprague's breast and hissed:

"Now, I have you safe and sound. Consider yourself under arrest. Come with me."

"I am willing to do that. In fact, I expected nothing else when I spoke to you."

At that instant Dill caught sight of two detectives looking at each other blankly.

"They had walked into the wrong church was not there.

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"Now, I have you safe and sound. Consider yourself under arrest. Come with me."

"I am willing to do that. In fact, I expected nothing else when I spoke to you."

At that instant both men stopped in sight. Dill knew him, and, believing that he had found a confederate, Sprague's countenance as Sprague better than one, asked the officer to help him get his prisoner to some place of safety.

"All right," said the policeman. "What do you want me to do?"

"Take him to the nearest police station, Sir," answered Dill. "I will follow along behind."

"You are mistaking your play in this game," said Sprague, "I came to you voluntarily, Mr. Dill, and I had an object in so doing."

"And what is it, pray?" asked the detective.

"I wanted to have a private talk with you."

"You can have that at the station."

"At the station I would say nothing. After I have had my say. If you allow me to have it, I am quite certain you will not want to hold me under arrest. Think a moment. Do you believe a man guilty of any crime would do what I have done to-night? Take me not to a cell but to some hotel. Guard and watch me as closely as you will. After I have spoken you will not detain me, I am sure."

"Your reasoning seems plausible, to say the least," responded Dill. "But you are a hard man to corner and a harder man to keep, Ralston Sprague, and I do not want to lose you. I am a fair experiment."

"Take me to some hotel," persisted Sprague. "I give you my word I will not leave one and the policeman can stand guard outside the door. I must speak with you alone and tonight."

The Commercial house would be a good place," suggested Policeman Sly. "I will stand watch outside the door if you wish."

"All right. Go ahead and I will follow. I will come right behind you with Sprague."

At the clerk's desk in the Commercial house the policeman registered for the detectives and his prisoner, writing down two names somewhat changed to occur to him at the moment.

There was an interchange of peculiar glances between the policeman and the night clerk, but the detective was too busy with thought to notice it.

"Strictly on the square left," remarked the clerk. "That's 803, on the top floor."

"That will do," replied Policeman Sly. "Gentlemen, you will come to the elevator."

Stanley Dill and his prisoner entered room 803 only a moment before the only door and the cramped apartment possessed. There was no window, no place on a cot.

"I will come to the point at once, Mr. Dill," Ralston Sprague began, at once, as the two were alone. "I want you to stop hounding me. If you will do that I can make you Alice's husband. She is very lovely woman worth five hundred thousand dollars."

"It is my business to pursue you," said Dill.

"Well, I propose to make it a matter of good business and good conscience on your part. I will come to the point at once, Mr. Dill," Ralston Sprague hurried on, as soon as the two were alone. "I want you to stop hounding me. If you will do that I can make you Alice's husband. She is very lovely woman worth five hundred thousand dollars."

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Caught in Sections.

1. The Fish—Well, I'll just take both of these worms before some other fish comes along.

4. "I'll bring 'em up this time." And he did.

2. The Fisherman—Great Scott! I've got two whoppers!—

3. —and I can't budge 'em.

HULLO!

By Sam Walter Foss.

"When you see a man in woe,
Walk right up and say 'Hullo!'
Say 'Hullo!' an' 'How d'ye do!'
How's the world a-using you?'
Slap the fellow on the back,
Bring your hand down with a whack;
Walk right up, an' don't go slow,
Grin an' shake an' say 'Hullo!'
Is he stricken in pain? Oh, sho!
Walk right up and say 'Hullo!'
Rags is but cotton roll
Just for wrappin' up a soul;
An' a man, no matter how
Hale and hearty 'How d'ye do!'
Don't wait for the crape to come
Walk right up and say 'Hullo!'"

THE MEPHISTO CAP.

"Oh, yes; and I forgot to tell you. You know your old flame is to be married in May?"

"Is she? Which?"

"You had a good many, hadn't you? Well, guess."

"Let me see. Madeline Kearney. Oh, you tell me sister. I'm too tired to guess. That railroad has shaken me all to pieces in the last hundred miles."

"Well, then, if you're too tired to exert your mind, Clarence Barson."

"Oh, and she marries—"

"Bob Bristol, of all men. Old enough to be her father, isn't he?"

Cortell had been away five years in the west and had just made a long journey in order to spend two or three weeks at home with his mother and sister. He had come back, it seemed to him, much more than five years older than he was when he left. There was upon him now the steadying pressure of large responsibilities, for he was very near to being head of a large business enterprise. All that he saw—even the faces of his mother and sister—reminded him of what he had been when his eyes last fell upon those scenes and those faces, and he found himself as he stretched at full length on the lounge wondering how he could ever have been so frivolous and so joyously careless of consequences in everything as he had been in the days that now seemed to him to belong to the dim distance of history.

"So women can forget sometimes, you see," his sister was continuing her talk.

Bob's thoughts were wandering back to the past. Presently he exclaimed, somewhat suddenly: "By jingo, Clare, I believe I have something. Let me see. When do you say Edna's to be married?"

"Middle of May, I believe."

"And this is the middle of April. By jingo! I wonder whether I ought to take it to her or send it?"

"That's your second 'by jingo' in one minute. Send what? Wedding present?"

"Eh? Yes, of course. I suppose a wedding present. I knew Bristol quite well. He's an older man than I am, but I like him."

"That evening Calvin Cortell unpacked a big leather trunk in the privacy of his own room. He took out a tin box that looked as if it had been designed originally to hold cash. He unlocked that box and took out package after package of carefully tied up papers—receipts, canceled notes, memoranda of many kinds. Under all these was a leather-cased daguerrotype of his mother. Last of all, under the case, in some tissue paper, were a pair of very much faded kid gloves.

Cortell took out the tissue paper package, replaced the daguerrotype, the various bundles of memoranda, canceled receipts and other business documents, locked the tin box and sat down to think.

He laid the faded gloves on the little writing table before him, drew up a chair, rested his elbows on the table and supported his head on his two hands. As a faint odor of the disinterred gloves came to his nostrils a smile, half of amusement, half of tenderness, played over his face.

"But the question is, how the deuce am I to do it?" he said aloud to himself after some minutes of this brooding.

The smile on his face grew more and more tender. Presently he sighed, and then he spoke again to himself: "That has nothing to do with now, old man. That was long ago. You've got to do it."

Edna Barson certainly had been a little disconcerted when the news came to her that her prospective brother-in-law before long suddenly made his appearance in the town that she lived in when her engagement to Bristol had been made public. She was not vividly conscious of any feeling for Calvin Cortell that could be construed as disloyalty to her fiancee, but she knew only too well that his presence will set every tongue in a small town, where each man's—or woman's—business is the business of all, and, considering many things, Cortell's sudden appearance just then, after a continuous absence of five years, would inevitably be made to bear a significance that would disturb the serenity current of her engagement. There had been rumors that Mrs. and Mrs. Cortell would some time or other, go west to make their home with Calvin, but not one had expected to see him back in his former home.

Edna sat before the fire two days after Calvin Cortell's arrival and was meditating over these things when Cortell himself entered. She was looking for a visit not from him, but from Bob Bristol, and when she found little or no difficulty in meeting him with conversation at first.

At first, that is. Her old friend or sweetheart lost just a little time in coming to the particular business of his call, and it certainly startled her a little when he said: "I am very glad I found you alone."

"Glad!" she said. "Oh, yes. It is nice to be able to have a little chat. Tell me about your life out there."

"I can tell you about that at some other time," said Cortell. "Just at present I have to discharge a duty. Oh, yes. It would be right. At least I wouldn't like it if I were in Bristol's place."

"Mr. Bristol?" said the girl.

"This"—and he took a tissue paper package from his pocket.

Edna opened the package, wondering. When she saw the old gloves lying there with the marks of wear of many years ago upon them, but also marked with the folds of many other wearings and careful keeping, a whole procession of memories passed before her mind. She was silent for some moments.

"What ought I to do with them?" she asked. "I don't know. Tell me."

Not the least doubt of it the whole affair was conducted in the most thoroughly in keeping with the rest that now this young woman on the eve of marriage with another man—a marriage into which no one had forced her—listened to pleading with a look of pitiful appeal in her eyes and with tears at a man who had parted with her five years before. Still, silly as it was, it was so.

Cortell on his part looked extremely uncomfortable. He may have been wishing that he had sent the old gloves by mail or by messenger. But then, again, he may have been sorry to see the girl sorry to see the appealing look and those swimming eyes.

"I—I don't know," he stammered. "Perhaps I ought not to have brought them. But I don't see why not. I don't see how I could have kept them, could I?"

"You might have burned them, mightn't you?" Edna said with a little mischievous smile.

"So I might," Cortell answered, quietly. "I give you my word, Miss Barson—I beg you to believe me—I never thought of that."

The manifest sincerity with which this was said and the ingenuous blush that accompanied the confession were irresistible. Edna Barson burst into a hearty laugh, which Cortell was not long in taking up.

But at that moment the street door was opened and then the door of the library, where these two stood laughing over an old pair of gloves, and the servant girl, in her direct and distinctive manner, pronounced, "Mr. Bristol."

There was nothing really embarrassing in the situation, but embarrassment was only too apparent. The event might have been different if all the persons concerned had looked at the case as it should have been looked at; but, while the girl, with characteristic candor, saw only the reality, Cortell was, for some reason, impressed chiefly by the appearance. Bristol, perhaps naturally, reflected only Cortell's view.

He at once walked to the table and, lifting the gloves, said, with eyebrows raised:

"A present? Won't you let me into the joke, too?"

"How are you, Bristol?" Cortell said, holding out his hand. "I hope you haven't forgotten me."

The worst of it was Edna was still laughing, and there were the gloves. Bristol appeared to think that the situation demanded a display of quiet dignity.

"I remember you perfectly, Mr. Cortell," he said, bowing slightly. "May I ask again what amuses you so much?"

Edna became serious in a moment, and as she bethina herself became angry.

"It isn't very much of a joke, Mr. Bristol," she said. "If you must have it, however, Mr. Cortell has just come to me for a pair of gloves of mine and has brought them to me. I suppose I ought to be glad to put them in the fire. Isn't it funny?"

"I hardly see it in that light," answered. "Perhaps I might appreciate the joke better if I knew where Mr. Cortell found these gloves."

As Cortell opened his mouth to make some answer to Bristol, Edna, putting up her hand, said:

"This is my business. I'm afraid you will not have an opportunity of fully appreciating the joke, Mr. Bristol, until you manage to get yourself into a better humor for that sort of thing."

She very carefully folded up the gloves and laid them behind the clock on the mantelpiece, while Cortell stared at her and Bristol stood biting his nether lip.

Then there was an awkward pause for some moments until Cortell said something about going.

"Why, I've hardly had ten words with you yet, Mr. Cortell," Edna said, with a wicked flash at the other couple. "Please don't go yet. Perhaps—perhaps I may find something of Cortell to show you if you'll wait a little longer."

"Then perhaps I had better call at some other time," Bristol said.

It was a very awkward situation indeed. Bristol was not at all pleased at the last observation of his, and Cortell could not run away after Edna's promising invitation.

Half an hour later Cortell said:

"Edna, could you manage to find that you might find something interesting to show me?"

"Did I?" said Edna. "Do you hold me to it?" It occurred to me suddenly. Wait here."

She ran out of the room and after a little while came back holding something behind her.

"Do you recognize this?" and she suddenly produced an old faded red velvet smoking cap. It was a mephisto, with sides pulled down and an absurd brush at one side.

"Bless!" Cortell exclaimed. "When did you find that old cap, Miss Barson?"

"About a week ago," Edna said, looking a little confused. "I didn't know you were coming back."

"Jack stole my cap, didn't he?"

"Yes. You had to go home bareheaded." And then she frowned prettily and tried hard to reach for pond lilies.

"And you wore it when you came back to me. I made Jack give me your cap to keep in pledge of your return."

"Of course you were going to send it to me?"

"Of course I was."

"By the way, didn't it occur to you to burn it?"

Then both burst out laughing once more. It was the first time that Bristol and Cortell had high words after that and that mutual friends in difficulty prevented them from fighting a duel, there never was anything in it. Bristol was a sensible man at bottom, even though touchy at times. He made some sort of apology to Edna Barson for his exhibition of temper.

But the Bristol-Barson wedding was postponed in a quiet way. It never came off. The Cortell-Barson wedding came off instead, though not until a year after the incident of the mephisto cap.

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A WOMAN SCORNED.

Earl Alston's Bride---Driven Forth Into the World Upon Her Wedding Night---The Serpent in Love's Eden.

By ELLA MARTIN,

Author of "Not His First Love," "A Brave Coward," Etc.

(Copyrighted, 1898.)

SYNOPSIS.

Alston Hall stands close to the Atlantic shore. Lady Alston tells Earl, her only son, that she flirted with Count de Villfray before her marriage, and that the count had sworn vengeance and afterward murdered her husband. Earl's father had left the Alston estate in England for fear of the count and brought Earl and Edith, her daughter, to live in the secluded old house on the New York coast. Edith is in reality the child of a dead friend, who, in a moment of peril, adopted by Lady Alston Virginia had a brother, but he had not been found. Earl Alston vows vengeance on Count de Villfray for the murder of her father.

CHAPTER III.

EDITH ALSTON.

For a brief space after Earl had ceased to speak there was silence in the dimly lighted room. Then quick, light footsteps were heard along the wide, mosaic-paved hall, and the rustling of a woman's dress proclaimed Edith Alston's return.

Lady Alston started and, leaning forward, laid her fingers significantly upon her lips.

Earl's face breathed warning, but not a word before her, Earl. There is no need to saddle her life with a knowledge of the awful truth."

"No, mother," he whispered back; "fear not that I shall betray it.

He arose and assumed his former careless position against the mantel. The next instant the portieres were drawn aside by a white, slim hand, and Edith Alston stood, a vision of loveliness, in the aperture. She wore a white India muslin dress with deep lace flounces, that gleamed with countless seed-pearls, and in her bodice was a bunch of red roses that matched the glowing color in her cheeks.

Her rich mass of chestnut hair was loosely knotted at the back of her queenly head, and her dark eyes shone like stars.

No wonder that both her mother and brother gazed upon her with pride; no wonder that both decided it would be cruel to shadow her young life with the secret that had gnawed like a canker-worm at her mother's heart for so long, and was now a burden upon her brother's mind also.

A voice, low, clear and wonderfully sweet to the silence that had fallen up the two, as Edith dropped the curtains and advanced into the room.

"Ugh! how ghostlike you appear in the semi-light! Only one taper, and that placed so far away! And both of you are as silent as a tomb! Earl, is this the way you entertain mamma while I am away?" she exclaimed, in a breath.

"And," she added, shrugging her shoulders, "what a contrast it is to the rooms I have just left! There all was warmth and light and flowers. It was delicious, I assure you. I've been gone awfully long, mamma. Did you think I'd eloped with the coachman? That's very fashionable in New York, you know. Besides, he is so handsome! He reminds me of the picture in the locket Virginia has. Haven't you noticed it, mamma?"

"No?" she echoed, as Lady Alston shook her head. "Well, he's handsome, anyway, and the temptation to elope with him was very strong—only he didn't ask me, after finished, with a rippling laugh.

"Then Earl is with you, is he, you ray dear?" said Lady Alston, hoping desperately that Edith would not follow her brother's example and give her heart to one beneath her.

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As for Earl, he did not hear half of his sister's words, for he was already wondering how Virginia had become possessed of the knowledge she imparted to him.

He proceeded, at Edith's request, to light one of the chandeliers that hung, like a cluster of white lilies, from the frescoed ceiling.

"Is there is Virginia?" Edith asked, presently.

"Yes, mamma," answered her mother. She has doubtless retired before this."

At that moment the figure crouching in the moonlight outside one window was seen and gilded stealthily away like a shadow, and, ascending the narrow stairs that outside the building, paused for a moment on the landing and leaned over the balustrade. For a moment Virginia, for it was she, listened to the voices below, then, peering for a while into the deep shadows that shrouded the ceiling, she listened.

Above and about her the branches of the trees, burdened with their clinging vines and passion-flowers, swayed gently to and fro like grim specters, and their low soughing sounded like warning voices in her ear. In one of the branches a nightingale was perched, but she heeded neither, nor her unappreciative ears; for deaf to its entrancing song she stood, her topaz eyes a-glitter, their light reflected from the diamond sapphire eyes of the gold serpents wound around her throat and arms.

For some moments she remained in an attitude of listening, gazing down into the deep gloom from which she had just emerged, the wicked glare in her eyes abating not one whit. Then having convinced herself that no one had discovered her late presence on the window-ledge, she swiftly and entered, through a paneled, oaken door, a room magnificently furnished. Before her stretched a vista of beauty and luxury; but she noted nothing of this; for quickly passing into her dressing room, she paused before the long, chevil-glass and examined her features critically, turning from side to side, as if taking a silent inventory of her charms. And now the sapphires glittered then, as if striving to outvie the beautiful light in the eyes of the woman who wore them; and their glitter was reflected in the coils of copper-colored hair piled high on top of her small, shapely head.

"Ah, my lady," she said to her reflection in the glass, "it is only tolerance Lord Alston feels for you now. He was hardly that his lady mother felt for Count de Villfray years ago, but she reaped her reward for her scorn—her just reward!

"How little my lord of Alston dreams," she added, with a laugh, "how he despises loves him madly, jealously, and will not fail to be revenged for the slight he has put upon her by passing her by for another. Ah, he, too, shall have his reward—his just reward!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE WEDDING.

Three months had passed since the events narrated in the preceding chapters. A hot August day had drawn to its close, and the shadows of night were creeping into Augustine.

Gorgeous Chapel was brilliantly lighted with numerous wax tapers in gold candelabrums, and the altar of the church was crowded with the elite of the city.

Earl Alston stood at the altar, and beside him stood beautiful Lillian Dorne—the woman he had chosen to be his bride.

Directly above the two hung a great floral bell, constructed entirely of white lilies, and on all sides of them were exquisite decorations of fragrant tropical flowers.

The bride wore a magnificent white satin robe and a flimsy bridal veil; and in lieu of orange blossoms a wreath of pure white lilies held the bridal veil in place, and among the filmy laces on her decolette corsage were a cluster of the same fragrant blossoms.

It was Earl's wish that his bride should wear lilies in lieu of orange blossoms. He hated her pale, sickly flowers, and, in truth, she looked not unlike a lily in her fair, pure loveliness. Her shining, golden hair, a crown of glory in itself, shone through the frosty veil like sunshine through a flossy cloud, her skin was like purest alabaster, and her deep, soulful eyes like velvety, purple pansies, and bright as twin stars. Her soft, curved lips were the color of blush roses.

Beautiful as a dream, lovely as an artist's conception, the mystery that shrouded her but added to the interest people felt in her because she was so beautiful, and because she was Earl Alston's bride. For the heir to Alston Hall was well and favorably known in the city. The brides past was known to no one except the bridegroom. But that she was pure and good was not to be doubted since the proud heir to Alston had chosen her for a wife.

Murmurs of admiration ran through the crowd when first it beheld the beautiful bride-elect; then a solemn hush fell upon the large assembly as the deep tones of the pastor were heard reading the marriage service. Then, when it was over, Earl drew the fragile form of his bride into his arms and placed his first kiss upon her lips.

Then once more the organ's notes were heard sounding sweet and soul-stirring through the lofty apartment, and to the time of the wedding march the bridal party filed out.

Earl pressed the lily-white hand that clasped his arm, and Lillian looked up into his face with a trusting smile in her velvety eyes and on her rosy lips, little reckoning the sorrow that was to come upon her because of that smile, and the long years and nights of bitter anguish that soon would follow. But all unconscious of the evil impending about the hapless head of Lillian Dorne.

When all had left the church, a man arose from a seat in the shadow of a large Madonna and child and glided stealthily after the wedding party—a man with a dark, evil face and eyes that gleamed like a cat's.

Outside the church the Alston carriage was awaiting the bridal party. Alston's coachman, was holding open the carriage door, while one of the footmen stood at the head of the spirited horses.

One glance at Henry Ashmore showed him to be above the position he now filled; his refinement was written on every lineament of his face. His figure was tall and well-built, equal to that of the master of Alston Hall, and though his garments were modest, he outfitted the humble station he was obliged to fill. His personal appearance he was a perfect Adonis, and his features were finely chiseled as a Cameo. His hair and mustache were black as midnight, and his eyes of deep, dark blue. Now his face looked white as death as the carriage door closed upon him, and his steady gaze at the bride compelled her to look at him, and when she had done so started slightly, but instantly regained her self-possession, and smiling brightly, bowed to her handsome coachman.

He was waiting for that, waiting to see if she would recognize him now that she and her marriage had raised her so far above him. But he learned that she had not forgotten him, but he hardly expected her to acknowledge her acquaintance with him now that she had married the master of Alston Hall, while he was only one of its retainers.

He lifted his hat and stood bare-headed until her full form had disappeared.

Once the carriage door was closed, on Henry Ashmore turned unceremoniously on his bride's, and said, questioningly:

"You know him, Lillian?"

Had Lillian known that Henry Ashmore, and answered, unreservedly:

"Yes, Henry, I know him. I was at the St. Hearns'. He was their coachman, I their governess."

Earl winced. Not that he loved his bride less because of her humble station, but he hated to humble her pride, and to want to hide it from the world, and the mention of her former position in life humbled her.

She was Lady Alston now, he thought; to none but her husband should she refer to her past life, and she should among the cushions of the carriage.

She was wondering whether it would be best to tell her husband that his coachman was her rejected lover. She decided at last that it would be better not to tell him now. She would wait until Henry had found another place, which she felt sure he would soon accomplish, and she must not speak of it while he remained at the Hall. Then, perhaps, it was his secret, not hers. No, she would not tell him at all. Edith had told her in confidence of of his annoyance when she had alluded to her past life, and she resolved to mention anything concerning it to him as soon as possible.

Thus she made her first mistake.

As the carriage drove slowly away from the church, a man emerged from the shadow of the old stone chapel, where he had been leaning unobserved against one of its massive pillars, and if with his face it would have presented an exulting light in his eyes.

"Well, that's cool by Jove!" he muttered, between his clenched teeth, as he watched the carriage disappear in the purple gloom. "To drive off with a gentleman's wife as if he owned her! Well, I like that—it's an excellent joke, but a very dangerous one, I fear. It's going to be a hot time in the old dainty Lily. You won't refuse to live with your lawful husband now that you've got her than a prison-cell, I take it. Good-by, my pretty, aristocratic bird! We shall meet me later," and with a smile of satisfaction lighting up his dark face, he strode away in the gloaming.

"Earl," said Lillian, as they neared the turreted building from which shone many a light, and which they soon learned was to be Alston Hall, her future home, "are your people displeased at your marriage? They were not present."

"My mother is indisposed," he answered, "and my sister remained at home to nurse her. But they are prepared to welcome you, my darling, though there will be no guests. We must have our reception later. When my mother shall have recovered. I know both my mother and sister will love you when once they have seen you. As for Virginia, well, she doesn't count. I didn't even inform her of my intended marriage, though I suppose she knows it by this time."

"Who is Virginia, Earl?"

"Virginia? Oh, she is my mother's protege. I thought I had told you about her."

"I don't think I ever heard you speak of her before," Lillian replied.

Alston Hall was brilliantly lighted, and the servants were busy in the kitchen and dining room, preparing a sumptuous repast for the bride and groom. The cook had exhausted her skill in preparing dainty dishes that were likely to prove delicacies to the bride. The housekeeper had flitted from room to room arranging and re-arranging until she had visited the bride's boudoir nearly a score of times.

In the drawing room Edith and Lady Alston were waiting; the latter reclined on a luxurious couch, and beside her sat her daughter, waving a fan slowly back and forth for the benefit of the invalid.

All the inmates of the Hall wore a look of expectancy; for was not the master to bring home tonight the future mistress of Alston Hall?

Cassie, the mulatto girl who had been previously engaged to fill the place of maid to the new mistress, was awaiting in the dressing room that lady's appearance.

To be sure, none knew the young girl by his title, but as master of the old turreted Hall Earl Alston had acquired a reputation in the maze of gnarled oaks and stately pines; he was looked up to and respected by all who knew him. And, of course, everybody was anxious to see the children, to see the bride he had chosen; but none suspected save Virginia, who had overheard his confession to Edith, that he was making a mesalliance.

Everything was ready, and all were waiting for the bridal party, with one exception. Virginia was nowhere to be seen. Where was she?

Ah! where?

Had not Lady Alston and her daughter

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been so preoccupied with thoughts of the bride whom they had never seen, they might have noticed her absence. But as it was, none gave her a thought, and she was left to her own devices. What those devices were it is our purpose to find out.

CHAPTER V.

AT THE RENDEZVOUS.

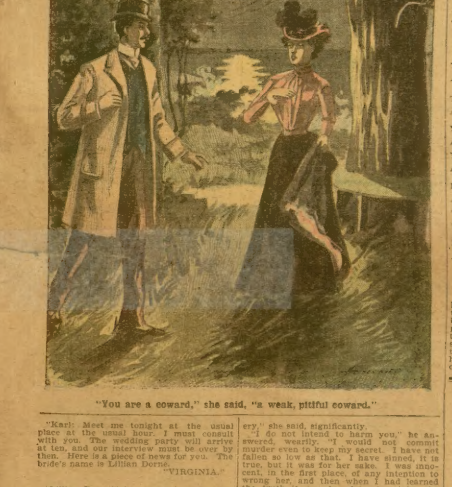
In the shadow of the dense foliage outside the mossy stone wall stood a man apparently waiting for someone. He was leaning against the damp, cold stones that formed the wall, and was gazing with a vacant stare straight toward the spot where the waters of the great Atlantic could be seen in the moonlight.

As he is a prominent character in our story we will attempt a description of him.

There was a dreary, hopeless expression on his pale face that gave way at times to a wild, hunted look. His closely-cropped hair was of almost silky fineness, so also was the mustache that but half concealed the mouth, which was tender and beautiful as a woman's. His forehead was high and broad, and near the temples grew silver hairs which were scarcely perceptible among the blonde ones; and their appearance there was not due to advanced years.

As he stood there he held crushed in his hand a tiny, perfumed note which had been instrumental in fetching him to this spot. In his beautiful home, not far from Alston Hall, he had a wife and child whom he loved dearer than his life. Yet he had come there to meet a woman.

After a while he spread out the wrinkled note and read it for the second time. Let us read it, too:



"You are a coward," she said, "a weak, pitiful coward."

"Karl: Meet me tonight at the usual place at the usual hour. I must consult with you. The wedding party will arrive at ten, and our interview must be over by then. Here is a piece of news for you. The bride's name is Lillian Dorne.

"VIRGINIA."

"Lillian Dorne!" he repeated, with stiffened lips. "What strange fatality sent that woman across my path? Oh, what a web of treachery and deceit is woven about me, all wrought by one little act of deception!

"Oh, Rose, my wronged darling! I fear the shame and sorrow will in the end burst upon your innocent, unsuspecting heart, in spite of all; and all my trickery and deceit will but redound to my undoing. But I will have gone too far to recede now. The mischief is wrought; I must go on to the bitter end.

As he ceased speaking a dark figure emerged from the dense evergreens and stood before him, faintly outlined against the dark background of the trees. He recoiled at the close proximity of the woman, and clutching for support at the damp stones, tore loose a trailing vine of passion flowers.

A cynical smile crossed the lips of the woman at his side as she saw him drop the loathsome blossoms as if they had been ten thousand adder stings.

Her mood instantly changed to his.

"Well," he said, "let us have the agony of this interview over with as quickly as possible. What can you want with me now?"

"Yes," she answered, slowly, "we will endeavor to get the interview over with as quickly as possible. We certainly do not wish to prolong it; we are not congenial. We found that out long ago, didn't we?"

"I am your fool, Virginia, I know that. There is no need for you to show me your power in this way. We are wasting time; come to the point at once. You know it is for your own interest to do so, for you say the wedding party will have arrived by ten, and it is nearly that now."

"I will tell you what I want," she said, "and you will help me"; she added slowly, emphatically, and though the sentence partook of a rising inflection, the tone in which it was pronounced rendered it less of a question than a command.

His face darkened.

"There is a limit to your power over me," he said, between his shut teeth. "Be careful that you do not ask too much.

"Then there is also a limit to your love for your beautiful, deceived Inez," she sneered.

"I will do anything except murder," he answered, recklessly. "Speak — command me, she Queen of Hades, Princess of Darkness!" and he bowed with bitter mockery.

"It may come to murder yet," she answered, coolly ignoring his words; "I cannot tell. I have not yet laid my plans."

"And do you suppose," he said, fiercely, turning upon her in the darkness, "that if I could bring myself to do murder, you would not be the victim?"

She smiled again, that slow, tantalizing smile that was just discernible in the moonlight, and he turned away lest he should be tempted to take that white, swan-like neck between his strong hands and choke the life out of her.

"Do you think the secret by which I hold such power over you would die with me?" she asked. "Be not deceived, Karl St. Clair, for in my possession is a packet of papers that would, in the event of my death, reach the hands of your wife—no, we can't call her that, can we?

"You viper!" he hissed, with difficulty restraining himself, and she smiled again.

"You see I am prepared for your treachery," she said, significantly.

"I will tell you what you want," he answered, wearily. "I would not commit murder even to keep my secret. I have not fallen so low as that. I have sinned, it is true, but it was for her sake. I was innocent, in the first place, of any intention of wrong her, and then when I had learned the truth it was too late to right the wrong.

"There is one way in which to make reparation. Leave her. Every moment you remain with her but adds to the pain of injury. Why don't you leave her, Karl?"

"I can't," he groaned, "there is a child to bind us forever. She is my wife in the sight of heaven—I won't give her up."

"And those eyes of my dead sister," she said, with a low laugh.

"Virginia, since you have that power over me, why not continue to wield it instead of wasting your time in taunting me? There is a way out of it all. Go over the same old ground again, I know I am at your mercy. What is your decision? Time passes; why do you not hasten?"

"Lillian Dorne must be removed from my path. Help me to concoct a plan to accomplish it."

"My God!" he cried, "have we not wronged her enough? Let her alone. You have nothing to gain. The fraud you have on the Alstons may be at any moment discovered. It is for your interest as well as mine to prevent her remaining beneath the roof of Alston Hall."

He passed his hands over his eyes, like one weary of everything, even life itself, and leaned heavily against the wall of damp stone.

"Yes," he said, in a hollow tone, "it means more steps toward perdition, more treachery and deceit. Hell is not far off for us, Virginia."

"You are a coward!" she hissed, wrathfully, "a weak, pitiful coward."

He turned on her fiercely.

"I will do Lillian Dorne no further harm," he said, in a savage whisper. "Do you swear!"

"Yes, dare not defy me, Karl St. Clair," she fairly hissed.

"You could not cause my downfall without bringing about your own," he retorted. "I defy you. We will fall together.

"If you will be reasonable there will be no need of either of us falling, as you put it.

"What is to be done, then?"

"Listen. Not an hour ago a message arrived that will take Lord Alston to the bedside of a dying man who has something of great importance to communicate to him, and which he will revoke to no one else. It is very urgent indeed, the messenger informed me. I sent him away with instructions to return at midnight, and the assurance that he should then see the master of the Hall. Two hours I have allowed them, two hours of unalloyed bliss beneath the roof together. After that——"

She paused significantly at him, and the eyes of the treacherous serpent glittered like diamonds.

"What then?" he questioned.

"Then there will be a small town in the interior, and though my lord may be sent on inquiries he cannot make the journey and return before Monday morning. Meanwhile, something may happen to part Lillian Dorne and Lord Alston forever—she must happen.

"Virginia," he said, drearily, "when am I to have my freedom? I have served my time already."

"When I am Earl Alston's wife," she replied, impressively.

"I fear that will never be."

"Then your secret will never be safe with me."

"It is not my fault," he said, impatiently, "that you do not possess charms sufficient to bring him to your feet."

"What is to hinder me," he added, suddenly, "from telling him the very night of and flinging your body into the sea, and so rid myself of the one creature who has ever been the bane of my life?"

This fascinating romance will be continued next week. Special subscription offer on page thirteen.

THE INTERMEZZO.

By Charlotte Thayer.

The light shone soft on you, my own,
With your white throat and dimpled chin,
And as the room was filled with each throbbing tone,
The angels seemed crowding in
The interspace, so soft and sweet
That it drew from my eyes the tears.
Ah, the echo still so fresh and fleet,
I catch o'er the space of years.

You were a grave boy, you and I,
At your throat a glimpse of blue,
And the stars outside, the waves of night,
Seemed looking in at you.
Your arm around me, you and down,
As each throbbing string you pressed,
And I crooned to the music's bidding
Its precious place of rest.

Each note was played so pure, so true
It fell full on the heart like dew,
And you, my own, you knew it, too.
The scarcely more than a little child
Twas the magic power of sound brings
From a violin's waiting, an organ's roll,
Away that the world forgets and sings
And passed from them to my list'ning soul.

I am carried back to that night, when I hear
That music, and you are with me there,
And my heart beats fast for you, my dear,
As it did that night.

How Do They Tell?

We have heard of the language of monkeys and of the language of bees, and of the language of crows, and even of ants; but it will be a new thing to most people, probably, that fishes have a language of their own. A Bismarck fisherman, Mr. Basil Field, has been making some investigations into this subject, and he says that fishes have some way of communicating a notion of their experiences to other fishes.

Mr. Field carried on his experiments, which he has described in an article in the Fortnightly Review, in the fish ponds of Mr. Andrew at Gosford, Inglaina. Those ponds are full of trout, which, at the time when Mr. Field first visited them, were so little accustomed to being troubled that when he threw a baited hook into the water all the trout in sight—a great number—rushed eagerly upon it.

He caught one, and removing it from the hook, threw it back into the pond. Then he put in a freshly baited hook. Two or three trout only came after it.

One of these he caught and threw it back into the water. Again he removed the baiting with a newly tasted hook, and this time, although he was very careful in dealing with fish, it was only after a long time that he lured another fresh to bite at it. And after a little further time it was entirely impossible to catch a trout in this pond.

However, by experimenting in another pond, newly well stocked, and not thrown back any fish, Mr. Field found that he could catch trout as long as he chose. The fish did not seem to understand that the removal of one of their number by this strange means had anything to them, but came continually to the bait.

If, then, a fish learns by only when the captured fish, released, goes back and mingles with his fellows that the danger is learned, and there is no reason to think it must follow that the released fish has some means of making its companions aware of the perils of the hook. This, whatever it is, may be called a "language."

An Honor Withheld.

The great yearly military manœuvers in the countries of Europe give rise to an annual harvest of decorations, for which was told of the young German kaiser was widely circulated last year.

While reviewing the troops at Strassburg he was struck by the martial bearing of a veteran. He noticed with surprise that the medal commemorating the very battle in the Franco-Prussian war was absent from his breast, and that he was only wearing what appeared to be a carnation in his buttonhole. The kaiser had the soldier summoned and interrogated him.

"Where and with whom did you serve?"

"With the Emperor Napoleon," was the calm reply.

The kaiser was disconcerted for a moment. He looked at the carnation and recognized the ribbon of the Legion of Honor; then he recovered himself.

"Ah," he said, smiling, "that is the one decoration I have not been able to obtain.

Here is another story, quite too full of human nature to admit a doubt of its authenticity.

The mayor of a small Italian commune had to receive the king of Italy, who, with his accustomed kindliness, pressed his hand like an old friend. Totally overcome with pride and emotion at this honor, the primo man lost not only his head but his tongue altogether, and stammered out, ashamed:

"Now that I have seen your majesty you can die content."

He Was There.

She sighed, as girls will sometimes, and then said:

There are moments when I feel as if I would hesitate even if the best man in the world asked me to marry him.

"Olivia," he cried, "you must be a misreader. I was just thinking of asking you to be mine."

Four seconds later she reluctantly promised that she would name an early day.

A Persevering Young Man.

Father—Didn't you promise to do all you could to discourage the attentions of the who comes to see you? And yet I saw him kissing you last night.

Daughter—Oh, but you have no idea how hard he is to discourage.

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A FATHER'S CURSE.

The Mystery at the Poplars--Sin and Its Bitter Sequel---The Gain That Came of Great Loss.

By EMMA HOWARD WIGHT.
(Copyrighted, 1899.)

(Concluded from last week's issue.)

CHAPTER IV.

A year later.

Roger Albemarle lay upon his death-bed. Four weeks previous he had been stricken with typhoid fever which was destined to end fatally. Lilian knelt upon one side of the bed, while upon the other stood Charles Sartoris.

The girl was white and wan, while her blue eyes, full of agony, were fixed upon her father's face, on which the dark shadow of death already rested.

"My child," he said, lifting his weak hand to lay it tenderly upon her rich, brown head, "when I am gone you will be all alone in the world. Oh, Lilian, if I could but see you the wife of Charles Sartoris I would die in peace."

A quiver passed over the girl's pale features. There was silence for the space of a moment or so, then she spoke, and her words brought an eager, incredulous look of joy to Charles Sartoris' face and a red flush to his brow.

"Father, I cannot refuse the last request you will ever make of me," she said. "I will become Charles' wife."

A look of joy, the last they would ever know, lighted the dimming eyes of the dying man.

"God bless you, my dear child," he murmured, "you have been my comfort and joy in life and you give me peace and content to my dying hours. Send quickly for a minister, Lilian, that you be the wife of Charles before death claims me."

A hurrier was dispatched in haste, and beside that death-bed Charles Sartoris and Lilian Albemarle were made man and wife. As the minister pronounced the final words a long sigh of content left the dying man's lips, feebly he extended his hand to Charles Sartoris, who quickly clasped it in his.

"Charles," said the dying man, "bring back the rose to my child's cheek, the light of happiness to her eyes."

"I shall devote my life to the endeavor to make her happy," replied the young man, with passionate earnestness.

The dying man held out his other hand to his daughter. She pressed it to her lips and her tears fell thereupon it.

"Father," she murmured, as she bent over him, "will you not forgive my sister before you die? Will you not take back that curse?"

The old man's brow, damp with the sweat of death, grew dark.

"Frailty her never!" he cried, and with those words upon his lips and the frown upon his brow, he died.

And as the soul of Roger Albemarle went forth to meet its God, the wail of a newborn babe echoed through the luxurious room where lay, weak and white upon her pillows, the daughter he had cursed.

A few hours later a telegram was handed Harold Dunbar, and it was not the announcement it contained that brought the red flush to his brow, but the name at the bottom, "Lilian Sartoris."

"So," he muttered, as he crushed the telegram in his hand, "she very soon consoled herself."

Two days later, when the physician gave him permission to inform his wife of her father's death, he told Maude her best. Though the rich color was faded in cheeks and lips and there was a pallor about the sunlit her starry eyes, she was very lovely, but his eyes rested upon her coldly.

In a bassinet beside the bed, all ribbon and lace and fine linen, the child slept.

"Maude," said Mr. Dunbar, "I have news for you from your home."

She looked up eagerly, hopefully.

"Oh, Harold!" she cried, "you have telegraphed them about me, and--and my father has relented and forgiven me for baby's sake?"

"You are mistaken," said Harold, grimly, suppressing a sneer, "I am the bearer of bad news--your father is dead."

Her dark eyes dilated.

"Dead!" she repeated, and under the delicate laces which covered it, her bosom rose and fell convulsively. "My father dead without having forgiven me," and the same look of fear, of dread with which she had read her father's letter one year before, came into her eyes.

"I have come here for you," said Harold Dunbar, and there was a look upon his face his wife had never seen there before. "Your sister is married--married to her old lover, Charles Sartoris."

"Oh, I am very, very glad of that," cried Queen. "I want her to be happy, poor Lilian. And she has taken little Queen's washing."

Harold Dunbar stood looking down upon her for a moment, but he made no effort to soothe her with caresses or tender words.

"It will not be advisable for you to nurse yourself," he said, coolly. "I will send your maid," and, turning, he left the room.

And Queen, cowering among her lace pillows, murmured between her sobs:

"Lilian, Lilian! Already you are avenged for the wrong I did you."

After a little while her sobs ceased. She lifted herself upon her elbow and gazed with passionate tenderness upon the child asleep in its dainty nest.

"Oh, my baby, my baby!" she moaned. "You must compensate me for the loss of your father's love."

CHAPTER V.

Ten years have passed away. It was two years since the close of the civil war.

On a cold day in December a dark, handsome woman, clad in costly furs, stepped from a carriage at the gate of Albemarle Hall and moved slowly up the walk toward the house. A pained frown contracted her brow as she looked about her. Sad changes had taken place in the old Virginia homestead.

It was the same story written over all the south, ruin and devastation. The slave quarters were deserted and deserted. It was the first time since that night, brilliant with moonlight, that Queen spoke, and her words brought an eager, incredulous look of joy to Charles Sartoris' face and a red flush to his brow.

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"Lilian, Lilian! Already you are avenged for the wrong I did you."

your marriage and his heart seemed to grow colder toward me. I had suspected for some time that he loved you. I knew it from the look upon his face when he told me of your marriage, that you were the wife of Charles Sartoris."

"Oh, Queen, Queen, why do you tell me this?" cried Lilian. "I never bore malice against you, I loved you too well, and--and I wanted you to be happy."

"I believe you, dear, for I know your gentle, tender heart so well," said Queen. "But my father was relentless. He did not even send me upon his dead-bed."

"Alas, no," replied Lilian, reluctantly. "I pleaded for you in vain."

"The memory of his curse never fails to fill me with dread," murmured Queen, with a shudder. "Not because I fear it may fall upon my head, but upon my child, whose happiness is far dearer to me than my own."

"Oh, no, let us hope not," cried Lilian. "I would like to have seen your child, Queen," and a wistful look crept into the blue eyes, brilliant with the fever which consumed even their depths.

"He is very like his father, not alone in appearance, but in disposition," said Mrs. Dunbar, with a profound sigh. "Tell me, Lilian, how did you come to marry Charles Sartoris?" she added.

"I married him at my father's death-bed; it was his last request," replied Lilian.

"Ah, I understand," said Mrs. Dunbar. "And--and, Lilian, were you happy?"

A flood of light leaved Lilian's sunken bosom.

"I was content," she replied. "My husband was all that was noble and good, and I respected him, but I had no love to give him. He gave his life for the dear south."

She sank back heavily and wearily among her pillows. Queen arose.

"You must rest much more now," she said. "You must rest. I am going to find your husband, as I have a few words for him I want to say to him."

She bent over and kissed her sister's cheek. The weak, frail hands clung about her neck.

"Queen, sister," murmured Lilian, with all the old tenderness in her sunken eyes, "you will forgive me? You will love me? You will not be lone?"

"Yes, dear, I shall not leave you," was the reply. "Now, try to sleep. I shall return soon."

She left the room. In the corridor outside stood a boy, a slenderly built child, with a fair, delicate face. "Charles Sartoris' favorite."

"I am Charles," he said, moving to Mrs. Dunbar's side and looking up into her face with eyes which were very like his father's. "Mammy says you are my aunt."

"Yes," Queen said, and she smiled, as she bent and kissed the fair, upturned face.

"I am glad that you have come," said the boy, "because mammy is sick and I am so much."

"But you have a brother, where is he?" asked Mrs. Dunbar.

A flush rose to the boy's cheek.

"Roger was very, very naughty again and mammy sent him to bed," he replied. "And I pleaded for him, for my own mammy," he added.

"You just now," said Mrs. Dunbar, gently. "Your mammie is tired. You and I will go in together very softly."

"That will be nice," said the boy, with a smile.

At that moment mammy came down the corridor.

"Yo' room am all ready, Missy Queen," she said. "Yo' must 'scuse me fo' not comin' down to meet yo', but I was 'tendin' Mass Roger. Him jes' been cuttin' an whalin'. I perfers nussin' white folks, dey different like in dey ways. Mass Charles, him am jes' like his father, and Lilian was nuthin' any trouble, but Mass Roger am de 'scentest chile I ever did see. I often tells him how to be good if him don't demand him ways," and in after years those words of the old negress came back to her return to Mrs. Dunbar brought with significant meaning.

About an hour later Mrs. Dunbar, holding little Queen's hand, entered her sister's room. The winter twilight was falling and the wind moaned dismally. The fire had died out and the room was dark in the corners of the room.

The boy gently withdrew his hand and ran up to the couch. Mrs. Dunbar advanced to the fireplace and stirred the embers.

"Mamma, dear," murmured Charles, as he bent over the couch.

She did not move nor answer.

"Mamma is asleep," said the boy.

Mrs. Dunbar turned. The fire blazed up suddenly and its light fell upon Lilian's face, which was very white. With a cry she fell upon her heart Mrs. Dunbar bent over the couch and laid her hand upon her sister's heart.

The boy watched her with a great, anxious face. Then the brown eyes--

"Mamma--she is sleeping?" he murmured.

Mrs. Dunbar arose, leaned him, her face pale, her lips quivering.

"Yes, Lilian," she replied, "your mother is dead. She passed away quietly, painlessly, as she slept."

Charles Sartoris himself, with a sob, buried the couch.

"Mamma is with papa now," he murmured, his little chest heaving. "And, oh, I am glad she did not know how naughty Roger was today."

EPILOGUE.

A few days after his visit to Abram Frye, the Boston detective, Doctor Mortimer was seated in the office of the door opened and the former entered.

Frye arose quickly, eagerly, to his feet.

"Ah, Mr. Frye, I am indeed glad to see you," he exclaimed, as he held out his hand to you will be glad to learn that I have been most anxiously awaiting your coming."

The detective's keen eyes rested for a moment upon the doctor's face, which was pale and wore an harassed look.

"No new developments to throw any light upon the mystery?" he said, quietly.

"Nothing whatever," replied the doctor, "and my position here grows so intolerably awkward that, but for the hope of getting at the bottom of the affair, I would not remain a day longer in Barrington. The story grows widespread, and the impression that I am not in my right mind becomes stronger every day. The affair is so inexplicable, so mysterious, that at times I almost believe that I was the victim of an hallucination. But tell me, have you arrived at any theory regarding the matter?" and the doctor's troubled eyes eagerly searched the detective's face.

The latter smiled.

"Of course, I had to arrive at some theory upon which to work," he replied. "But I never make known my theories for several reasons which it is unnecessary to state. By the way, I have taken a room at the Barlington hotel, representing myself as a commercial man, taking a rest for the benefit of my health. I asked if there was a physician in the place and was directed to you, after first being enlightened as to your peculiarities."

"Oh, of course," said the doctor, bitterly. "All my patients are forsaking me, and, under the circumstances, I can scarcely blame them."

"Have you seen any of the people at The Poplars recently?" asked the detective.

"I have seen Harold Dunbar several times riding a fiery black thoroughbred," replied the doctor. "He looks pale and gloomy and rides like fiends were pursuing him. I understand that since the death of her nephew Mrs. Dunbar has not been seen abroad."

"I think I understood you to say that the

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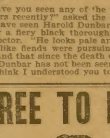

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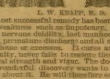

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elderly couple at the Poplars have a son and a daughter?" said the detective.

"Yes," replied the doctor. "The four comprise all the servants. They lead almost as secluded a life as their mistress."

"Are the Dunbars on visiting terms with any of the people in Earlington?" asked Abram Fyre.

"No," was the answer. "The only person who has ever had access to The Poplars is a young girl who was employed by Mrs. Dunbar as seamstress. She staid there about a week. This young girl, whose name is Irene Monterey, lives with her mother in a cottage not far from the Poplars. James Monterey was dead some years, and the widow came to Earlington, but speculated heavily, and when she died left her wife and daughter almost penniless. The girl, who is beautiful, refined and well-educated, teaches and sews to support her mother and herself. I saw her in town a few days ago and she looked wretchedly pale and frail. I was about to stop and inquire if she had been ill, but she looked so frightened and evidently tried to avoid me that I had compassion upon her and went my way," and the doctor laughed bitterly. "But all this has no bearing upon the matter in question," he added, with a sigh.

"Perhaps not," said the detective, carelessly, though he had been listening with the closest attention. "I believe I understood you to say that it would have been quite impossible for this Charles Sartoris to have inflicted such a wound upon himself?" he added.

"It was utterly impossible," replied the doctor, emphatically. "Charles Sartoris was shot from the back. That woman and her husband know who the murderer is, and, in some diabolically mysterious way, have avoided an investigation into the death of Charles Sartoris' death," and the doctor sprang to his feet and began walking restlessly among the office.

"The strangeness, the mystery of the thing will drive me mad," he cried. "While I am by no means a rich man, Mr. Fyre, you shall have no reason to complain of your recompense if you bring the truth to light and prove that I am the victim of some fiendish ingenuity."

The detective rose.

"You may rest assured that I shall do my best," he said. "Not alone for the sake of pecuniary reward, but also for the fame which will be mine if I am successful. If I should suddenly leave Earlington for a time you will understand that it is upon matters connected with this affair."

The detective then took his departure.

Three weeks have passed away. For two weeks the detective had remained in Earlington, then suddenly he had departed.

One morning Doctor Mortimer was seated gloomily in his office, when the door opened and Abram Fyre entered.

The doctor's greeting was not very enthusiastic. On the occasions when the detective had visited Doctor Mortimer he had been very uncommunicative, and the former had become very much discouraged as to his ultimate success.

Therefore when the detective said very quietly and calmly, "well, doctor, the mystery is solved," Doctor Mortimer stared at him ludicrously, almost wildly.

The detective smiled slightly, placed his hat upon a chair and seated himself comfortably upon another.

"What—what—mean?" at length ejaculated Doctor Mortimer.

"Why, just exactly what I said," replied the detective. "But take a seat and you shall hear all about it."

The doctor's bewilderment was giving way to intense eagerness, took a seat opposite the detective.

"Well," began the latter, "I will commence by informing you what my theory was regarding this affair—that another corpse had been substituted for that of Charles Sartoris. Impossible as this may at first sound, it was, after all, the most reasonable construction, as it was utterly impossible to do away with the wound which had caused the death of Charles Sartoris.

"Therefore, my first object was to find out something of the antecedents of the Dunbars, where they had lived previous to taking up their residence at The Poplars, and, most important of all, why they lived so secluded a life. I believed that this latter knowledge would afford me an important clue, and I was not mistaken.

"I learned from one of the shopkeepers that Mrs. Dunbar paid her bills with checks upon a Rochester, New York, bank. I went to Rochester and found that place had been the residence of Mrs. Dunbar, her son, and two or two nephews. I called at Roger Sartoris, up to the time of their coming to The Poplars.

"That Charles Sartoris had a brother?" interrupted the doctor.

"Yes, a brother," was the reply, "so like him that it was almost impossible to tell them apart."

The doctor started, was about to speak eagerly, but restrained himself and remained for the detective to continue, which the latter did.

"It appears that this Roger Sartoris resembled his brother Charles only in appearance. He was wayward, he indulged, and took to evil ways. He ended his career by forging the name of a prominent man in Rochester, and fled, it is supposed, to Canada. Mrs. Dunbar, crushed by the disgrace, left Rochester and took up her abode in Earlington, with her son and nephew.

"I returned here feeling perfectly sure that the dead body of Roger Sartoris had been substituted for that of his brother Charles. My first object was to ascertain how Charles Sartoris met his death, for I believed that this would establish a motive for the change of corpses. I first made it my business to keep a close watch upon Miss Irene Monterey."

"Upon Irene Monterey!" exclaimed the doctor, with a look of astonishment. "Why, what on earth has she to do with the matter?"

"When you spoke of her having spent a week at The Poplars, I drew the following very reasonable deduction—that a young and beautiful woman could hardly remain in close companionship, even for so short a time, with two young men, just at the age of passion and susceptibility, without some result. Her changed appearance and her desire to avoid you after Charles Sartoris' death went far to strengthen this deduction.

"An involuntary look of admiration passed over the doctor's face.

"My marvellous powers!" he cried, "a scoundrel and two discoveries in regard to the matter, that he was exceedingly weary of the dull, monotonous life at The Poplars, and that he hated Harold Dunbar, who had once struck him across the face with a whip and scarred him for life, in a fit of rage.

"It was through these two feelings that I expected to gain my ends. I inveigled myself into his confidence, managed to vary the monotony of his life a little, and inflamed him against Harold Dunbar. When I thought the time ripe I asked him to dine with me at the hotel. We had a private room in which I had concealed a couple of witnesses.

"Wine was not lacking at this repast and the young man became quite merry. A few adroit questions on my part and I and my witnesses were in possession of the following facts: The day preceding the death of Charles Sartoris, Roger made his appearance suddenly at The Poplars. He had grown weary of exile, was out of funds, and had resolved to brave the danger and return to the United States. No one outside The Poplars knew of his presence there.

"On the day following his return Harold Dunbar shot his Cousin Charles in the back and left the latter lying in the grove north of Irene Monterey. When he found that he had not killed his victim, he returned, frenzied with fear, rushed home and concerted with his mother, the older servant and his son brought Charles Sartoris home.

"Hoping to save his life they sent for you. They thought to shield Harold Dunbar by attributing the shooting to accident. I presume in the hurry of conference they overlooked the fact that from the position of the wound it could not have been self-inflicted. Of course they had not calculated upon your action in the matter.

"During your absence in search of the coroner, Roger Sartoris, who had for some time been afflicted with heart trouble, died suddenly. It was the housekeeper, who is undoubtedly a woman of original character and unprecedented daring, who suggested substituting the corpse of Roger for that of Charles, the resemblance between the two brothers making it impossible for anyone, who had not been in close association with them, to discover the change.

"So during your absence, doctor, the change was made. The body of Charles was placed in a remote room and that night placed in a rough coffin made by the two men and then buried in a secluded part of the grounds. When the body, with a bullet wound in the back of the neck, is exhumed, I imagine, doctor, that people will change their minds relative to your hallucinations."

"The reports of your skill have certainly not been exaggerated, Mr. Abram," said Doctor Mortimer. "You have extricated me from a most unpleasant position and I am very grateful. But what steps do you propose taking now?"

"I have a warrant for the arrest of Harold Dunbar for the murder of his cousin, Charles Sartoris," replied the detective, as he rose to his feet. "My first step will be to execute it. At the trial everything relating to this remarkable case will be made clear, and your family, doctor," with a slight smile, "be fully established. Now, will you kindly call the sheriff and myself to arrest young Dunbar?"

"Yes," replied the doctor, "I think I owe myself this triumph over the woman, Marguet."

The door of the Poplars, as on the occasion of Doctor Mortimer's other eventful visits, was opened by the housekeeper. Upon the detective's inquiry for Harold Dunbar a strange smile crossed her lips, which were very white.

"You will find Harold Dunbar in there.

"Father! father! thy curse has indeed fallen upon my child."

service of Harold Dunbar's father. The woman had nursed young Harold and loved him as much as she did her own son. A scoundrel and two discoveries in regard to the latter, that he was exceedingly weary of the dull, monotonous life at The Poplars, and that he hated Harold Dunbar, who had once struck him across the face with a whip and scarred him for life, in a fit of rage.

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PUZZLE

FIND THE PRINCESS.

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The picture represents four men and a boy and a horse in the woods searching for the Princess. She is hidden in the trees, but only one man can see her. Can you find him? Then find which one pointed out the Princess. Then locate the parties carefully and have them all correctly described. Then tell us how many miles and in which direction each one walked. Then tell us how many miles and in which direction each one walked. Then tell us how many miles and in which direction each one walked

He Wanted Company.

Jonah—Hello, whale!
Whale—Well, what is it in there?
Jonah (insinuatingly)—Say, old man; you couldn't swallow a nice mermaid to help me pass the time, could you?—Judge.

$100 Reward, $100.

The readers of this paper will be pleased to learn that there is at least one dreaded disease that science has been able to cure in all its stages and that is Catarrh. Hall's Catarrh Cure is the only positive cure now known to the medical fraternity. Catarrh being a constitutional disease, requires a constitutional treatment. Hall's Catarrh Cure is taken internally, acting directly upon the blood and mucous surfaces of the system, thereby destroying the foundation of the disease, and giving the patient strength by building up the constitution and assisting nature in doing its work. The proprietors have so much faith in its curative powers, that they offer One Hundred Dollars for any case that it fails to cure. Send for list of Testimonials.

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Domestic—Sure, a riference from you wouldn't do me any good, for O'ye could liverybody there's no belavin' a wurrud yez say.

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The Popular Summer Tourist Route is the Grand Trunk Railway, reaching all the famous Summer resorts including Petoskey, Mackinac, St. Clair Springs—The Muskoka Lakes, Lake of Bays (Highlands of Ontario), Niagara Falls, Thousand Islands, Rapids of the St. Lawrence, White Mountains, Montreal, Saguenay River and the Seashore resorts of the North Atlantic. Also Watkins Glen, Glen Summit, Atlantic City, Asbury Park, and other popular resorts on and reached by the Lehigh Valley R. R.

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Copies of illustrated literature with full information as to rates, etc., will be sent on application to J. H. Burgin, City Passenger and Ticket Agent, 249 Clark St., Corner Jackson Boulevard, Chicago.

Actually.

Wife—But you told me to get the gown, dear.

Husband—You said it would cost only about $25, and here is a bill for $100.

Wife—Well, that is all it did cost the dressmaker.

How Wallace Saved the Day.

The fate of the battle hung in the balances. The commanders of the invading corps looked anxious. The obstinate Spaniards refused to be dislodged.

At that moment General Lew Wallace spurred to the front and saluted.

"Has the time come, general," he hoarsely shouted, "for the dernier ressort?"

The commander hesitated. Then he shuddered, and nodded assent, and turned away.

Ten minutes later the Wallace Annihilators, 400 strong, swept on to the field.

The Spanish gunners looked in amazement at this intrepid band. So might the Russian gunners at Balkalava have looked at the Light Brigade.

The Annihilators halted and coolly dressed their lines.

"Attention!" roared the valiant Wallace. "One—two—three—all together!"

And then as one man those 400 elocutionists began to briskly recite the "Chariot Race" from "Ben Hur."

The Spaniards never stopped running until they reached the extreme end of the island, and then most of them plunged in and struck out lustily for Porto Rico.

Approval.

"What are ye readin' about?" asked Farmer Corntossel.

"I've just got to the chapter," replied his wife, "where two young men of bygone days determined to 'go out an' make for good an' all which was the better fencer.'"

"Well, that shows some sense. Ef the young men nowadays got up contests like them, we'd not only have less loafin' but better fences."

Puzzle Picture.

Find the dog that chases the tramp.

None in Stock.

The other day a fish peddler's horse stopped in the street and refused to stir an inch. The vender began to belabor the beast with a stick, when an old lady put her head out of the window and exclaimed:

"Have you no mercy?"

"No, ma'am," replied the peddler, "nothing but mackerel."

Prepared for Emergencies.

Wife (at seven a. m.)—Now, deny your condition last night. Here you are with your hat and shoes on. Don't tell me you didn't come home the worse for drink!

Husband—Not a bit, dear. You know I have lately taken to walking in my sleep, and I thought I'd go to bed prepared.

Worst Case on Record.

"Is it true that your husband is very absent-minded, Mrs. Newly?"

"Perfectly. We've been married six months, and many an evening at 11 he gets up and takes me by the hand, tells me what a delightful time he has had, and would leave if I did not remind him."

MORE EXPENSIVE YET.

Clausen—That's foine stuff—that whisky. It cost me 90 cents.
Dougan—O! bed some lasth wake that cost me me job.

She—If I am to become your wife you must give up smoking and drinking.
He—Yes.
She—That's settled, then; now, is there anything else you can do without?
He—Yes—You.

Her Trust.

Going smilingly up to his mother one day, Tommy said:

"Ma, haven't I been a good boy since I began going to Sunday school?"

"Yes, my lamb," answered the mother, fondly.

"And you trust me now, don't you, ma?"

"Yes, darling."

Then spoke up the little one, innocently: "What makes you keep the mince pies locked up in the pantry the same as ever?"

Same Rate.

Weary Willie (reading)—Tennyson, de poet, used ter git a dollar a word.

Chauncey Dilldikes—Dat's about de same rate I used ter git—when I sassed de judge.

Mutually Repellant.

"I thought Borrowall and Tutcher were old acquaintances?"

"They are. That's the reason they are not speaking to each other."

Illustrated Expression.

Eating his words.

They Parted at Daybreak.

Ethel (to George at front stoop, after saying "good-night")—Oh, George, won't you please close the shutters before you go?

Voice (from upper window)—Never mind, George; it isn't necessary. Jane will soon be down to dust the parlor furniture, and she will need light.

Discovered by a Woman.
I have discovered a positive cure for all female diseases and the piles. It never fails to cure the piles from any cause or in either sex, or any of the diseases peculiar to women, such as leucorrhœa, displacements, painful menstruation, etc., and will gladly mail a free box of the remedy to all sufferers. Address
Miss C. B. MILLER, Box 19, Kokomo, Ind.

Driven to It.

Kind Lady—If you need clothing, I can supply you with an old suit of my husband's, but they'll be about four sizes too big for you.

Tramp—Never mind, mum, I'll wear 'em. I'd rather be mistook for an anglo-maniac than freeze.

Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup for Children teething, softens the gums, reduces inflammation, allays pain, cures wind colic. 25 cents a bottle.

Exercise After Eating.

Lady—Now that you have partaken of a good dinner, are you equal to the task of sawing some wood?

Tramp—Madam, equal is not the proper word. I am superior to it.

Ice Cream Now Made in a Minute.

I have an ice cream freezer that will freeze cream perfectly in one minute; as it is such a wonder, a crowd will always be around, so any one can make from $5 to $6 a day selling ice cream, and from $10 to $20 a day selling freezers, as people will always buy an article when it is demonstrated that they can make money by so doing. The cream is frozen instantly and is free from lumps. I have done so well myself, and have friends succeeding so well that I feel it my duty to let others know of this opportunity, as I feel confident that any person in any locality can make money, as any person can sell cream and the freezer sells itself. W. H. Baird & Co., 134 Telephone Bldg., Pittsburg, Pa., will mail you complete instructions and will employ you on salary, if you can give them your whole time.

A Pert Question.

Willy Peck—Say popper, Tommy Strong, wi'l's father asked me a funny question the other day.

Mrs. Henry Peck—Did he, my son? What was it?

Willy Peck—He asked me what your name was before you were married.

Time's Changes.

Jasper—I think I'm entering on the second period of matrimony.

Jumpupp—What do you mean by that?

Jasper—When I was first married, if I got drunk, my wife thought I was sick, but now when I'm sick she thinks that I'm drunk.

An Inquiry From Kentucky.

The Colonel believes there's a doctor who claims that human beings could get along without stomachs.

The Major—Where does he expect us to put our liquor, sah?

Poor Fellow.

Jack—How did you get so wet?
Cholly—Walked six blocks in the wain, Jack—But you have an umbrella with you, Cholly—Yaas; but me man wasn't theah to put it up, don't ye know.

Terrible Result.

Watkins—I told Ethel last night if she laughed again I'd kiss her.
Woolens—Well, what about it?
Watkins—She had hysterics.

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Scientific treatment at home without pain, operation or detention from business. Send your name. Free information. DOCTOR CHARLES CO., Chattanooga, Tenn.

A Great Bore.

Miss Tapemeasure—Don't you waltz, Mr. Gimlet?

Mr. Gimlet—Bless you, no! If I did I should bore the floor full of holes.

THE BACHELOR GIRLS.

"Girls," said the tall blonde, placing her elbows on the luncheon table and leaning her chin on her hands in a lazy, indolent fashion, "did any of you ever see a ghost?"

"A ghost!" shrieked the little stout girl with a perceptible shudder. "Oh, Dick! It is nearly half-past twelve and the very worst time to tell tales of horror."

"The very best time in the world," corrected the dark-browed girl, as she poured a quantity of thick rich cream upon her strawberries and slowly smothered them in powdered sugar.

"What is a midnight luncheon for if not to see a bit unusual? Besides," she continued, "have not we bachelors, one and all, promised to sit up and wait for Mildred to return from Racine tonight, and if we don't talk of something we ought not to we are sure to go to sleep."

"But we could suggest something more interesting than ghosts, couldn't we?"

"No, ghosts are awfully interesting, and I want to talk," said the tall blonde.

"You have the floor," piped the girl with Titian hair and nose glasses. "We are all attention."

"Well," began the tall blonde, with a far-off look, "I once lived across the street from a house that was haunted."

"Haunted!" cried the bachelor girls. "By what?"

"Ghosts, of course," snapped the blonde.

The little stout girl groaned and clasped her fat hands. "Did you ever see it?" she asked.

"That is like reading the last chapter of a book first," indignantly cried the blonde. "Now if you girls will let me alone I will tell you of that ghost."

"Well, he was a born aristocrat and liked the parlor best, I suppose; besides there was more room there. One night a party of us went right up to the window."

"Oh, my! Weren't you frightened?" asked the little stout girl in alarm.

"Not at all," said the blonde. "There was nothing there but a little, sick dog. The boys were mean enough to say it was the dog we saw and mistook for a ghost, but I guess I know a dog when I see one. Besides, this ghost was all white and the dog had a black spot on its ear."

"Hush!" the little stout girl held up one chubby finger. "Did you girls hear anything just now?"

"No. How nervous you are!" laughed the dark-browed girl, pushing back from the table, crossing one ankle over her knee and clasping her arms in back of her head in languorous ease. "When I was a schoolgirl we used to live on the west side, near Oakley avenue. In our block there was a nice enough little house, but no one was ever seen in it and no one ever came out, yet the place was the cleanest in the street. Night and day there was always a dim light in the room shining through the half-closed shutters. Some of the more curious neighbors stopped the postman to see what name his letters bore, for he often carried mail to the house, but the envelopes were blank but for the house number and street. If it snowed heavily during the day the next morning found the steps of our mysterious neighbors innocent of snow, and the walk to the back door was always clean. Once in the wee small hours of the night mamma and sister Alice happened to be returning from a ball and espied a great

(Continued on page fourteen.)

A GLARING ERROR.

Mrs. Cityflatt (examining her new country cottage)—Why, Harold! how could the painter have made such a glaring error as that?

Mr. Cityflat—As what?

Mrs. Cityflatt—Why, he's gone and painted the orchard a different shade of green than the blinds.—Judge.

"You needn't get so cross about it," retorted the dark-browed girl, "and everybody reads the last chapter of a book first; how else would you know how it ended and whether you wanted to read it or not?"

"But the ghost," almost shouted the blonde, raised to walk at night."

"Why didn't you say so before and not keep us so long in suspense?" the pompadour girl said, carefully wiping her glasses.

"I never heard of a ghost walking in the daytime," ventured the little stout girl, meekly.

"Girls, I am going to resign from the club," cried the tall blonde in anger, bringing her fist down with a bang upon the table. "I won't have anything to do with you. I am going to send my parrot and birds home and move out tomorrow."

"But the ghost!" cried the club in chorus.

"Oh, yes," resumed the blonde, accepting a cup of chocolate. "The house had been rented by a young poet and his bride. The young husband used to shut himself up in his room and write, while the young wife beautiful things about the stars and moon."

"How lovely."

"Wasn't it? But the young wife couldn't appreciate his genius and always wanted him to give more attention to the lumber business. That was his side line. She was very handsome, and used to sit and pose for his window, when he locked her out, with one of those wavy Spanish combs in her frills and big strings, on her brown curls and big mantilla draped over her head and her, where she would help him, and not to leave everything to his mamma."

"Oh!" asked the dark-browed girl.

"No," went on the blonde, "but he wrote a beautiful poem to 'My Lovey's Pink Bonnet.' Well, one day the poet died. 'The angel of death stole into his locked chamber and bore him away on the wings of rest,' was the way the papers had it, but the doctors said he died of 'heart failure caused by lack of exercise.' And after that the poor poet's ghost used to pace up and down the parlor and moan."

"Why didn't he pace in his own room?" interposed the little stout girl.

"Well, he was a born aristocrat and liked the parlor best, I suppose; besides there was more room there. One night a party of us went right up to the window."

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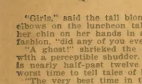

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26 YEARS OLD.

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W. D. BOYCE CO.

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PROVED CIRCULATION.

Since the first of the year industrial consolidations having a total of capitalization of $1,626,325,000 have been floated and put on the market. It is any wonder the market occasionally kicks? In the lot some represent good, money-making propositions, while others are decidedly on the wild-cat order. Nearly all have a large amount of common stock, which, before it becomes stock, was water. Following is the list up to the first of the month as prepared by the Financial Chronicle:

Capital authorized—	Com. stock.	Pref. stock.
Am. Auto. Weigh. M. Co.	$ 5,000,000	$ 5,000,000
American Beet Sugar Co.	15,000,000	7,000,000
American Chicle Co.	4,000,000	4,000,000
Am. Car and Foundry Co.	25,000,000	25,000,000
American Fish Co.	2,000,000	
American Ice Co.	2,500,000	1,500,000
American Steel Hoop Co.	5,000,000	5,000,000
American Tinplate Co.	5,000,000	5,000,000
American Tobacco Co.	25,000,000	25,000,000
American Woolen Co.	20,000,000	10,000,000
American Steel Foundries	25,000,000	25,000,000
Borax Consolidated	2,000,000	2,000,000
Central Foundry Co.	5,000,000	5,000,000
Cent. Union Gas (N. Gas.	10,000,000	10,000,000
Cen. S. Co. and R. Co.	15,000,000	7,500,000
Consol. Car Capsule Co.	1,000,000	
Continental Cement Co.	1,000,000	1,000,000
Consol. Steel Car Co.	5,000,000	5,000,000
Electric Boat Co.	5,000,000	
Electric Storage Battery Co.	12,500,000	12,500,000
General Chemical Co.	10,000,000	10,000,000
Gen. Chem. (Cub. todacco).	12,500,000	7,500,000
General Electric Co.	30,000,000	15,000,000
Internat. Steam Pump Co.	15,000,000	12,500,000
W. Dis. & Warsh. Co.	10,000,000	10,000,000
Maryland Brewing Co.	3,250,000	3,250,000
Nat. Biscuit Co. (Delaw.)	10,000,000	10,000,000
National Carbon Co.	5,500,000	4,500,000
Nat. Enamel. & Stamp. Co.	20,000,000	20,000,000
National Fish Co.	2,000,000	
National Lead Co.	10,000,000	5,000,000
National Screw Co.	20,000,000	
National Starch Co.	27,000,000	27,000,000
Nat. Straw Board Co.	3,000,000	3,000,000
N. Y. & Pa. Ink Co.	5,000,000	5,000,000
N. Y. Air Brake Co.	20,000,000	20,000,000
Pacific Coast Borax Co.	2,500,000	
Pittsburg Coal Co.	20,000,000	7,500,000
Pittsburg Laundry Co.	1,750,000	1,750,000
Pressed Steel Car Co.	25,000,000	25,000,000
Republic Iron & Steel Co.	30,000,000	25,000,000
Royal Baking Pow. Co.	3,000,000	3,000,000
Rubber Goods Mfg. Co.	25,000,000	25,000,000
Standard Milling Co.	8,000,000	4,000,000
Standard Sanitary Co.	32,000,000	
Union Bag & Paper Co.	60,000,000	11,000,000
United Fruit Co.	20,000,000	
United Gas Co. of N. J.	6,000,000	
United Lt. & Heat (of Ill.).	6,000,000	6,000,000
U. S. Cast Iron Pipe & Fy.	15,000,000	15,000,000
U. S. Cast Iron Pipe & Fy.	15,000,000	15,000,000
U. S. Envelope Co.	10,000,000	10,000,000
U. S. Tarnish Co.	15,000,000	15,000,000
United States Steel Corp.	1,000,000,000	
Va. Iron, Coal & Ck. Co.	10,000,000	
Total	$629,475,000	$332,975,000
Total stock issue		$962,450,000

RECAPITULATION.

Amount of common stock	$ 629,475,000
Amount of preferred stock	332,975,000
Amount of bonds	96,000,000
Grand total	$1,626,325,000
Add increase in stock of American Tobacco Company (increased from $25,000,000 to $50,000,000)	25,000,000
Increase in stock of Continental Tobacco Company (from $10,000,000 to $100,000,000)	25,000,000
Total	$1,676,325,000

Since the above table was compiled other trusts aggregating some $200,000,000 have been organized. What can be said? The figures are more eloquent than language. The magnitude of the scheme of plunder and oppression has no equal in all history; it is monumental.

THE MAELSTROM.

BY EDWARD NOBLE.

"Few of those who wander up and down the river know what lies behind the Sandspit at Holehaven," said Gaskin. "In those hulks there is enough dynamite to level half London, were it within reach."

We were steaming slowly against the ebbing tide, returning on Gaskin's launch from a late visit to the Medway. The sun had sunk behind a broken mass of clouds, and now threw a fiery glow across the purple river, that flashed and scintillated in widespread patches down, to where the water tumbled in foaming savagery under the Virginia Mews.

Suddenly we noticed the launch was swinging rapidly shorewards.

"What's wrong, Dismal?" cried Gaskin, as he approached the skipper; "surely you are not chance enough to the sands."

"There's something bye in the mud there, sir. Do you make it out? It's about a quarter on the port bow now, sir. Steady, Kosh!"

"I see. What is it?"

"Looks like a tiller rower another of them 'missions,' sir," said Dismal, with his eyes glued to the glasses.

Gaskin took a telescope from the rack, and stood searching the shore.

"God! Dismal, it is!" he cried, as he shut the glass with a snap. "Look, Ralston, yonder lies another of the hulks that cross the threshold of this great London of ours, a body stripped naked by whom?"

"Steady, Dismal! Go dead slow, and have the boat get ready."

Five minutes later we left the launch and, rowing in a dinghy, were soon safely ensconced into the dismal shelter of the banks. The river ran many channels here, a dozen creeklets and countless twisting rivulets, drained over the flats from the farther marshes, and meander to the sea even hand. The banks were dry; the swaying reeds and tufts of Spartina were black in the dark, and from their midst ran the torturous streamlets, glistening under the sunglare.

When the boat reached the sands we leaped quickly ashore, and waded through the slime until we came upon the object of search.

It was the body of a man, tall and powerfully built, with features cast in the heroic mould, massive thighs, and the torso of a Hercules—the body of a man who would end his life dearly in a fight; whose strength would be a terror to others in a struggle. Yet here he lay, a flaccid heap of inertia, stark naked at the edge of the tide.

Gaskin, who knew all matters whilst Gaskin kneeled down, searching for traces of identification, but found none, and rose.

"We are too late," he remarker, quietly. "We must get him on board, and take him up. What a magnificent specimen, eh, Ralston?"

"A perfect gladiator," I replied. "Good God!"

The men had turned him over whilst we were speaking and I instantly perceived a terrible gash across the throat. The left cheek of a man who had died in an agony of fear, pearly white on his bleached face and in his staring eyes.

"There is a mystery about this man's death, Ralston," said Gaskin, as we helped up, lads, and get him to the boat."

"My God!" cried the skipper, who was stooping to lift the man's feet. "What's this? Lumme! If he haven't been sucked dry a'ready."

He pointed to a punctured wound in the soft, pulpy part of the left breast, from which drawn and blue.

"That has not been done in the water, Dismal," said Gaskin, as he stooped to examine the place. "The man has been bled there before death."

"By which, sir, you mean this chap's been murdered?"

"That's about it, Dismal."

"Lumme!" whisper whistled.

"He's a Dutchman, sir," he remarked, in consequence of the tattoo marks. "I wonder he should say he hailed from."

"Somewhere in the North, probably," said Gaskin. "By the way, how many Baltic men are there lying in the Hope?"

"There was quite a fleet o' 'em, but the lawst few days' fair wind has sent 'em scootin'. I doubt if there's many now."

By the time we had carried the body on board, and headed the launch up Reach, the darkness had closed in. Low in the far nor'west a few faint copper tongues lingered and against the waning light, the outline of the fort-capped Coalhouse Point stood out in bold relief. Overhead the low hung lay the clustering masts and yards of ships at anchor.

We crossed straight over from the tail of the sands for the Middle Light, as quash to cheat the tide as with the idea of looking up the foreigners we might congregate at this end of the Lower Hope.

There were, as the skipper anticipated, only a few vessels left. Of these, two lay well down towards the head of the creek, another farther up and almost in a line with the Port boundary mark. As we steamed past them we stopped to hail each consecutively, asking if they had lost any of their crew. In each case the same answer was returned. No. All hands were on board, and they were sailing in the morning. But as we crept slowly towards the third, we saw a light flashed many times rapidly from a position somewhere on the vessel's stern.

"Answer that chap," said Gaskin, sharply; "no, not the whistle; wave the binnacle lamp."

This was done, and we saw the light waved frantically a few moments; then all was darkness.

"Crawl up as quietly as may be," said Gaskin again, "there's something adrift here, or they would hail us."

Before long we drew silently under the great square stern of a Norwegian barque, and passed in the rusty anchor chains. She was the Maelstrom of Bergen. Her name, picked out of a gigantic scroll work in yellow letters, was just above us. There were three square ports higher up, but no light appeared in either. Evidently if the cabins were lighted the shutters were closed tightly. Whilst we were carrying on the silence, the end of a rope lowered quietly over the bulwarks, trailed in the water close alongside, and on looking up we saw the shadowy outline of a man standing over the rail from behind the wheelhouse.

In another moment he had slid down and was hanging in an infinite clear of the launch.

Gaskin held of the rope. Pull him in, Dismal," Gaskin whispered.

Presently with the help of the skipper, the man was seated in a heap on the skylight. Who are you?"

"It's Cap'n Gaskin's launch?" he whispered, looking about him in a dazed fashion. "Where are we? Have you come to launch wer her shear on the river. Whist, for God's sake, whist!"

"What's adrift, my lad?" said Gaskin, as he helped him from his flask.

"She," said the man, tossing off the liquor at a draught "there's some about some chaps as I rode out of the Mouth of Hell. Thuck's me—I'm just out of it; an' my name is Hellings, Cap'n Gaskin—decoded. Drop the launch astarn sir."

Gaskin gave the order.

"Why the tide, sir. Oh, my Gawd Not with the tide, sir."

As we drove through the darkness, Hellings rose from his crouching posture on the skylight, and, standing on the deck at the eyes of the launch, gazed steadfastly at the harrier of the engine.

"Why did I say, drop her astarn quiet?" he muttered, presently. "Because the ship was faint in the distance. "Because, Cap'n Gaskin, I've been through the devil, sir, which is the wusser sort. Oh, my, Gawd!"

The man had stumbled across the partly covered corpse that lay on the launch's deck. He shuddered as he recognized it, kneeling beside it, his face twitching and his hands fluttering in engine room skylight.

"Who," he whispered. "It's Biornson—the last of 'em! the last of 'em!"

He stumbled to his feet again and called to Gaskin to stop.

We went over to where he stood and I heard him speaking rapidly to him.

"Were you to pilot her down?" he questioned.

"That's about it, sir. Times are hard—a man must live."

"I don't blame you, but the pilots would."

"There's as good men in the boats as ever pilotted a ship, sir. Talk about your robbery, Cap'n Gaskin; ain't it robbery for the pilots to put a prof over all the rest? Ain't that robbery?"

"That's better," said Gaskin, quietly, to me; "now we can get something out of him."

"Look here, sir, it's like this. I'm adoat in the old boat betimes off Greenwich lawst night, and I'm hailed by a chap steering down stream in the wake of a little tosher as she could have stowed betwixt galley and mainmast. He was no less than alongside, so I says to myself, I'll take the chap's rope and come aboard you, sir. Perhaps there'll be a job out of it, perhaps there won't, but it's always the way of this sort; so hook her it is. By-and-by, I fix the boat's slip and climb on board over the rail. There's a blue-haired Dutchman at the wheel, an' there's a yellow-haired Dutchman by the binnacle, and they're having the pooh.

"'I'm the skipper,' says I, 'but there's no pilot. Hellings, there's all in this here ship, and I'm the only Englishman aboard, morsin'. Cap'n, says I. 'Goot morning,' says he. 'Sir,' says I, 'are you wanting a pilot?' 'Any man could see that by the way you're standing out in the thick of the tide when you might be in the slack.' 'Yes,' says he, 'I'm your man,' and we clenched the deal in the good a glass of Hollands as ever you may wish to get outside of.

"Well, sir, we tow down river all day as quiet as you like, and towards evening come to anchor at the foot of the Lower Hope. There's a lot of Dutchmen lying there then, but the wind coming westerly a Wednesday morning, sent the most of 'em scootin' wiv a flowing sheet.

"That morning, shortly before noon, I'm standin' aft talkin' to this here Biornson, when I hear the fluter o' petticoats about the tebbin stairs. 'Hallo!' says I. 'Women aboard!'

"Oh, yes,' said Biornson, who spoke English first-class, like most o' these Dutchmen. 'It's the cap'n's wife. Haven't you seen her?'

"She grubs in her room then,' says I; and with that I turn about, and there she was standing afore of the companion stairs. Cap'n Gaskin, I ain't much of a hand at givin' you the pictur of a woman, not havin' had much trick wiv 'em. But I've seen pictures—pictura of angels and gells wiv dawk eyes, and balmy lips, and breasts at the hospital up at Greenwich—and lummel there you are; tall, straight as a lamestermast, round as an apple, dawk hair, red lips, and eyes, sir—eyes that would look through a man and bring him up all standing.

"Biornson takes off his cap and stands looking at her. I do the same and stand like a fool while she blares out at us out of those black eyes of her's a minute. Then she turns and goes below, looking as haughty as they make 'em. There's a thunk across Biornson's face.

"Cap'n's wife, sir,' says I. 'Ought to be,' says Biornson. 'Ho, ho!' says I, that's the game, is it? Where did you pick her up?'

"Out in Rio last voyage,' says Biornson. 'She was for marrying the old man when we got home. But it didn't come off. He felt shy of it in his own town; promised to marry her here. Now my lady won't be married, and there's a fuss between 'em.'

"When I come on deck after tea, Biornson, who had taken a drop too many, comes up, and whispers: 'There's trouble down aft, Hellings; there's mutiny being stirred. I wouldn't be the old man. These Spanish women ain't to be trusted.'

"That night, whilst I'm walking the deck, it's going on for two o'clock in the morning, I hear a scream, and I stop and I remember in a minute what Biornson has told me. Then I hear the cry of cattle which is drawn. There's a low, swashing noise down in the hold of the ship. S-w-i-s-h-h-h. w-h-r-r-r. w-h-r-r-r; then all is as still as the grave. I go to sleep up across my head, sir, and the chills run down my back, for it's a ghostly noise I hear—the sound of a ship that is sinking I know. It don't belong to ships, or steamers, or the river, sir. It's the sinking of a giant moth.

"Cheer, lads,' went on, then all grew as silent as the grave. And in that silence—if I'm not mistook—I heard a man stone dead. Cap'n, wiv marry a spill of blood in all the deck.

"What makes you say that?' asked Gaskin, quickly. "Did you think of foul play?"

"I didn't think it, sir. I knew it till the next day—yesterday that is—that it was murder. I'd seen nothing, and there was no sign. The skipper died in his bed, sir, and I and the boatswain sewed him up in a mail moon."

"So," said Gaskin. "How far are we from the Maelstrom, Dismal?"

"Matter of half a mile, sir."

Gaskin turned to me, and let me know when you are well ahead. Go dead slow."

"In the morning Biornson comes up me." "Hellings,' says he, 'I'm going to bury the dead,' he says, in a queer voice. 'Lumme,' says I, 'then I heard his ghost quit.'

"How?' says Biornson, sharp. 'I tell him just what I'm tellin' you, Cap'n, ask me six days as hard as ever you can't tell you—no more can she. So they call Biornson aft, and talk to him a spell in their dirty lingo.

"They want to know whether they need report the ship's missing, sir. They want to sail tomorrow, and would rather not have him in the log. 'Let him be,' says I, 'it's all right.' 'Yes,' says I, 'it's all right and the law. No man that don't know the ship's name can sail this crawft down.' What you take can sail this crawft down. What you take can sail this crawft down. What you take can sail this crawft down.

an' he's shakin' like a ship in stays. At last he gets up, sees me.

"Pilote,' says he, 'there is a mystery here that we cannot understand.' 'Lummee, says I, 'what are you giving us?' As though a chap wiv a hole for a eye couldn't see that.' 'Hold,' says he. 'the mystery is aft—in the cabeen—inside the cabeen—wheer—ah-h-h-h—where there is a blank door!'

"Just then the skipper's wife comes to the kebbin door. She stands an' says nothing—only looks, until Bjornson grows fidgety, turns round, and sees her. Then he looks, too; she smiles, and a flush grows on his face.

"Sir,' said Hellings, as he paused to gaze like one spellbound into the night; "that's the lady for me but one; I see him a-eyein' her side, and when I think of it, it fair strikes me dizzy. All day long they stay together on the poop, on the main deck—anywhere within sight of me, until I begin to think I'd been wrong my hook as soon as may be, for it's me they're watching now.

"After dinner I see a chawnce of a row coming up, and slip aft. But my bost is now. That sets me up the aars. 'Lummee,' I shout out—'will any of this, that boat'll cost you fifty pound.' What do I care? says Bjornson, who stands quiet as you like with her beside him. 'My bost as was fast off the quarter this morning.' I am very sorry,' says Bjornson, coming as soft and to look; 'she must have slipped adrift. Alas, with our short crew we cannot put out the long boat to find her, and, you see, there is no other.'

"It's as true as gospel, and I'm in a hole, and know it. What can I do? Nothing, only look and pray for a craft to drive past us, and pick me off. But we're too far down to quit flight for that. So night comes on, and I make ready to spend mine on deck. 'No step tonight, my son,' says Jr 'an' keep your weather eye liftin' fer what may be cruising around.'

"But it's no use, sir; a man must sleep when I can—but I'm. Sir, I slept—the—the—the, the pa—the—the—the—dead—sleep—of that kebbin, there's two feet run with devil, and Gawd only knows what besides.'

Gaskin turned to the skipper.

"Drop down tod the Madeiron," he ordered.

"Give me a drink of whisky, Cap'n," said Hellings, 'an' I'll tell you.'

"Bring to under the ship's bows, Dismal. Put us on board. Then you run up and fetch the police. All speed, my lad, when you've left us.'

After giving these orders, Gaskin went below and presently returned from the cabin with a bag of pistols.

"You with the Kilda?" he asked Bjornson, "I am with you, but one lot I think a peg wouldn't kilt us before we start."

The night had settled down dark and lowering. The wind came in fitful gusts across the broad expanse of river, trending to the westward. Here and there, out in the middle of the stream, the dusky tracery of outward bound barges loomed darkly against the more invisible Lambeth hills. Whilst close at hand, towering above us, the solitary Mastiron lay silent as the grave, with her ones twinkling light hanging on the rigging abreast the forestmast.

Presently the launch had driven close under the high overhanging bow of the Norwegian ship. She was lying at double anchor with a score of turns in her cables, one of which stretched out broad on the starboard bow, carrying the other slack down it.

"Let her come astern a bit," cried Gaskin under his breath. "Gently does it. Look out for the launch, Dismal, and put us alongside the cable. So! Steady starboard! Dead slow ahead! Now, then, Ralston, follow me. Only look out; the chain is slippery!"

In another minute my friend had climbed

All day long they stay together.

sometimes, and I had been awake all day. I don't know what time it was. It must have been after twelve o'clock when I jump up with a start. How long I've been asleep, Gawd alone knows. The lawst I remember is hearin' the sound of them two wives purring and smoothering one another wiv kisses.

"I remember this, and somethin' more. It was—sound I heard the first night I'm in. [illegible] hooter—s-h-s-s-s-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-s-s-s

AMONG THE COUNTERFEITERS.

Loston Swamp Island---Thrilling Perils in the Woods---The Boy Heroes of the Clam River.

By J. M. MERRILL.

(Copyrighted 1899.)

SYNOPSIS.

Nevin Tilham and Keith Kimberly, two adventurous lads, go hunting and get lost on an island among the swamps. They are attacked by a dog, which Keith kills with his rifle. A girl appears and attacks them for killing her fourteen-hundredth companion. At the last boys go with her to her home, a log house in a clearing. Mrs. Dampers, the girl's mother, treats them in a friendly manner, but the children seem decidedly unfriendly. That night the boys sleep in the loft of the rude dwelling and Dampers prepares to kill them. They draw lots for a window and escape into the woods. Dampers, rifle in hand, searches them. They elude Dampers and spend the night in the woods. Keith discovers a man in the morning and follows him. They come to another cabin on solid ground in the swamp. Keith asks for food [illegible]

CHAPTER VII.

AN UNEXPECTED ASSAULT.

Yes, there stood the incarnation of evil---Terry Dampers.

Keith felt his heart give a smothered beat and then stand still in his bosom. Was the war of the past night to be renewed, and would the islander side with his enemy of the Clam? To the boy's astonishment Dampers smiled when he saw his runaway guest of the perilous evening. Advancing, after a nod to Dorcas, he put out a friendly hand to Keith, saying:

"I am glad to meet you again, Master Kimberly. You departed so early this morning I had no opportunity to bid you good-by."

Keith eyed the speaker wonderingly. He accepted the proffered hand, but entered into no explanation of his past conduct. The two men exchanged looks.

"Where is your comp---"

"He's not far away."

"When will you go home?"

"This morning."

A grim, unreadable smile flitted over the pale face of Dampers. He seemed to have forgotten the stirring events of the past night, his wife, even the woods, gun in hand, seeking the lives of two stray boys. Keith was puzzled. Could it be possible he thought that he had been mistaken with regard to the intentions of the island creek settler, and that the events of the preceding night were but the figments of a dream?

"If you will wait a while," said Dampers, "I will make a canoe for you to sail home in. I am going that way very soon. You got a good ways off the course coming over here, and I doubt not I speak the truth when I say you are lost."

"Yes, that's right," assented the boy.

Dampers, who had no weapon with him now, seemed wonderfully tempered for one who had exhibited such viciousness only a few hours before. Keith, for his part, was not deceived. He believed this mild actor acting was "but the mask of a sinister design."

"Simeon, I would like to see you outside for a moment," said Dampers. "Wait a short time, my boy, and I will act as your guide. It won't be safe for you to attempt to make your way alone. No doubt your good father and mother are worrying for you this time, over your long absence."

The wily Keith knew this to be true. He felt sure that long ere this his father and some of the neighbors had been out searching for him and for Nevin Torban. The two men, who seemed on the best of terms, started to quit the room. As they were passing out, Keith detected an exchange of glances between the woman and Dampers. This put the stout boy on his guard.

He wished that Nevin would appear. Such wish was not likely to be gratified, however, as the boy would doubtless remain where he was awaiting his friend's return. Keith believed Dampers was plotting mischief and he therefore decided to depart without waiting for him to return.

"I must be going, Mrs. Torchet," he said, approaching the corner where he had seen the islander place his rifle.

"Why the hurry?" asked the woman.

"I think I have tarried long enough. My rifle---where is it?"

Keith had made the somewhat startling discovery that his faithful Marlin repeater was no longer in the corner where Simon Torchet had lately placed it. This discovery set the boy to thinking. If his gun had been purposely removed then he was in deadly peril. He could well believe that this green islander and his no less coarse wife were congenial comrades of the Clam creek settler. If the latter was evil enough to wish to compass the death of Nevin and himself it was not likely that Simon Torchet and wife would attempt to thwart his wicked purpose.

"Your gun?" asked the woman. "Are you sure you brought one here?"

"Sure. Your husband took it from me and placed it in yonder corner," returned Keith, shortly.

"Then it ought to be there no---"

"But it isn't there now."

"Strange. I don't believe you brought a gun here. I haven't seen it, anyhow."

Keith was fairly dashed. In anger he believed the woman was purposely falsifying to him. She must have seen the rifle and doubtless knew where it was at this very moment.

"You must be blind, then," retorted the boy who went to the corner and looked about searchingly.

There ain't no gun here, master," presently he declared.

Plainly not," agreed Keith. "What have done with it?"

He turned, fiercely [illegible] as he spoke.

"I---I---I---I had your gun. You'd better go if you want it. I don't you a---I'll tell me I fetched rifle, fur I didn't do nothin' a thing."

"Reckon has taken it," said Keith, stutteringly. "I reckon you'd better tell me if you wish to get rid of me, you'd better produce the rifle."

"That's the same as tellin' me I lie," cried the woman clinching the broom handle with both hand, and preparing to use it to strike. Keith turned from her in disgust, darting like a hawk upon the boy.

Keith had lifted the latch, and was now now pulling open the door. She seized his wrist in a fierce grip to prevent him from carrying his intention into execution. But frantic effort to frustrate his design vanished Keith that his suspicions regarding the woman were well founded. She was fore-determined at all hazards to lock within the cabin. Throwing her weight back, sharp pull and succeeded in opening the door.

"Come away! Come away, you bad boy---around the corner!"

As the door swung open his eyes were greeted with the unexpected sight.

On a shelf sat a tray which was heaped with shining silver coin. Without right was to Keith at least, a novel one. He had not thought the Torchets evidences of wealth in this humble abode, and his boy wits---re instantly at work to unravel the mystery. He saw nothing but the money and rifle was in sight. It was to prevent him from seeing the heap of money that Simon lied Mrs. Torchet to make such frantic efforts to drag him away from the cupboard door.

"Great cats!" exclaimed the lad, "what a lot of money!"

"Come away, come away! Don't you touch it!" cried the woman, who had become weak and shaky, and no longer exhibited the fierce courage of a tigress.

"Keep you worry," said Keith, "the money's not mine."

"No, no; don't touch it---"

Keith continued to gaze, as if fascinated, on the glistening pile. He thought the heap appeared to be of large size. He was interested to be new, as he imagined it must look when the coin came from the mint.

"Come away, I tell you."

Mrs. Torchet grasped his shoulder, pulling with both hands. At the same time closing the door sharply with her foot. Keith made no great effort to resist the woman. The sight of so much money dazed him. He was not sure but what the woman was going to a back door. Opening this, she thrust him across the threshold.

"Go away, now, and don't let me catch you round my house again!"

Keith stood crestfallen as the door was slammed in his face. He found himself in a rough-boarded room which was evidently used as swoodshed. There was one window and a single outside door. While the boy stood debating, the door through which he had been thrust opened and the burly islander confronted him. There was an angry blaze in the beady eyes of Torchet, while his prime teeth gleamed ferociously.

"So you've been pryin' inter our secrets, eh?" he growled, hoarsely.

"I did not mean to pry into secrets," explained Keith. "I was looking for my rifle ---what did you do with it?"

"How about the money---you saw that?" "Yes."

"Fools to leave it that," growled the man. "I warned mother ter be careful. Yo' can't trust a woman nohow."

"My rifle---"

"I'll gin it to yo'---in ther neck."

Torchet sprang at the lad with the fury of a tiger. Keith staggered backward under the enraged man's onslaught. He struggled bravely, but helplessly, in the grasp of a giant.

"Don't kill me, sir," pleaded Keith.

"Yo' are too smart ter live, yo' young spy!" answered the heartless islander, cursing off further outcry with a clutch of his bony fingers. The boy was soon gasping for breath. His struggles grew fainter and fainter each moment. He thought he was dying under the pressure of the madman's fingers upon his throat.

CHAPTER VIII.

A STARTLING DISCOVERY.

Everything looked black to the faintly struggling boy. He was too far gone to hear the sound of an opening door, nor did he realize that help had arrived until Torchet released his hold and sprang backward another side of the main building. Keith fell gasping for breath to the ground.

"Shall I shoot him, Keith?"

And then for the first time the stout lad saw a tall, lanky youth standing over him with a leveled gun in his hands. Keith struggled to his feet and shouted beside his rescuer.

"Look out ther!" yelled Torchet, throwing up his hands. "that shooters liable ter go off. Point ther muther way I tell yo'."

"You scoundrel, you deserve to be shot!" cried Nevin, as he sighted along the barrel of his fowling-piece in the way. "You are not loaded---"

"I---I didn mean nothin'," whined the man. "I war only havin er friendly tussle with---"

"---me," answered [illegible]

"---I didn't shoot," said [illegible]

"---Pshaw! I guess you're right," declared Nevin. "I Legged for his life." Nevin kindly granted his [illegible] ---ompanion by his friend to the [illegible] ---ion on the [illegible] ---side.

"Now, what?" asked [illegible]

"We must get away from here [illegible] as possible," said Keith. "Dampers is [illegible] ---ve over an hour behind us. [illegible] ---in any event."

The boys hastened away from the vicinity of the house and entered a thick undergrowth near. A hard run for [illegible] a short distance Nevin came to a halt, saying:

"I guess I'd better stop and load up."

Thus speaking he took a couple of cartridges from his pocket and thrust them into the breach of his fowling-piece. Keith [illegible] ---ed to a shuttle of amusement.

"I forgot to reload after firing at a deer," explained the lad. "I had the greatest time wading through water and climbing fallen trees, you ever heard of, Keith. I've had an awful rough experience right away. I was a good deal provoked when I discovered that you had deserted me that morning. It was by simple chance that I learned where you were. I saw a smoke and went toward it. Hearing a racket I ran into the shed as you know. I wonder how it happens that every blessed human being we have so far met in these woods is an enemy."

"Not every one, Nevin."

"Yes, every blessed one, Keith."

"You forget June."

"Pr, well, she's only a child. As an offspring of the Dampers, she will be as bad as any of them when she grows up. She showed her real nature when she nearly clawed your eyes out for killing her dog."

"I don't know about blaming her for that," answered Keith. "The dog was the only real friend the girl had. Dampers and his wife do not like her. I saw that plainly, and I feel sorry for her, don't you?"

"I suppose I do. But about these folks here? What was the row about that set that big mastiff upon you so savagely?"

Keith explained. When he had done so, his friend uttered an ejaculation.

"Worse and worse, and more of it," said he. "You ran into as bad a nest as the one on the Clam, Keith, every bit as bad."

"True," agreed the stout boy. "The Torchets compare favorably with the Dampers. The two families are friends, and both are engaged in the same business."

"What sort of business is it, do you suppose, Keith?"

"The business of counterfeiting."

"Great scott! Do you think that, [illegible]

"I am satisfied of it, else what meant the sage of the man and woman when I discovered the trap door in the floor of the cupboard? I did not suspect the truth at the outset, but the more I think of it the more firmly am I convinced that the Torchets and Dampers belong to members of a gang of money-coiners."

"Pshaw! But I guess you're right," exclaimed Nevin. "I remember hearing father talk about a gang of counterfeiters. Now, let me see, what did I [illegible] ---a bit surprised if we've sighted [illegible]

"---I---I---I

"Perhaps the killing of the dog exasperated him."

"Not to the pitch of murder, Keith."

"No——"

"I'll tell you what it is, Keith; Dampers is afraid of your father. You remember the conversation I told you about as taking place between the settler and his wife last night?"

"Yes. Dampers seemed to know my father and feared I would return home and talk about him. There's a mystery about it that we have not yet fathomed."

Keith remembered hearing Dampers refer to himself as Baratow. The lad knew that a man by that name had wronged his father in the past, although in what manner he did not know. Of one thing both boys were satisfied; Terry Dampers was villain enough to commit any crime, and to fall into his hands meant death to them both. Nor was the ruffian Torchet any less a villain as was evidenced by Keith's almost fatal encounter with him. The latter's assault was doubtless caused by the discovery the stout lad had made of the newly-coined dollars.

Keith believed that Torchet and Dampers were even now searching for them, rendering the situation very unpleasant to say the least. Although Nevin had his fowling-piece and several rounds of ammunition, yet it was not a serviceable weapon save only at short range. Keith's repeating rifle was in the hands of the enemy.

"If I only had my rifle," said the stout lad, "I should feel very much better."

"Of course. You'd ought to have looked out for that."

"How could I look out for it any better than I did?"

"If you had looked after it at all it would have been better than you did so," declared the thin boy. "Very likely the old woman appropriated your gun while the two men engaged your attention."

"I don't doubt it."

"It won't bring back the gun to mourn over it, however," said Nevin, with a re-

Keith fell gasping for breath. "Shall I shoot him, Keith?" cried Nevin.

signed look. "It may be some satisfaction to remember that you wouldn't have discovered the bogus money if you had not been poking about in a search for your shooter. That discovery has put us on our guard, and like enough, saved our lives."

"Or maybe endangered them," said Keith.

Our boy friends sat down on a log and waited for some evidence of pursuit. They heard nothing of an alarming nature.

"Maybe there'll be no pursuit," suggested Nevin. "What say to our moving off? It wouldn't be healthy for us to be caught on the island, you know."

"True. I have a thought, Nevin."

"Great Scott, you have, Keith. Expound, please."

"Suppose there's an underground room to the house, and that it is full of outlaws, what is to hinder their coming up into the surrounding the island? We would then find escape impossible."

"That would be a scheme, truly," returned the somewhat timid Nevin. "My goodness, Keith, let's get a double-quick gait onto us and get to the mainland as soon as ever we can, Keith."

The tall boy sprang to his feet and started to move away. Keith, however, remained a picture on the log. He was thinking deeply and did not notice the movement of his companion until the latter had disappeared. Not more than a minute elapsed ere Nevin, from the direction of the house, was seen hurrying back toward the lad on the log. Nevin's face was white with fear. He halted before his companion, breathing heavily.

"What is it?" asked Keith, who realized that something of a startling nature had taken place.

"Hist! Don't speak so loud. They're doing just what you said, stretching out to surround us! There's a dozen of 'em, and they're all armed to the teeth!"

CHAPTER IX.

CAUSE FOR ALARM.

The announcement made by Nevin Tetham was of a most startling nature. Keith sprang to his feet and grasped the arm of his companion tightly, while his face lost all trace of color.

"You do not mean that, Nevin," cried Keith, hoarsely.

"I've told only the truth, Keith."

The two lads consulted in husky whispers for several minutes. What to do they did not know. The island was doubtless completely surrounded by this time, and safe retreat for each out of the question.

"I think we'd better make a dash for the mainland," said Keith, after a brief consultation with his friend. "This suspense is far worse than real danger."

"The danger's real enough you'll find," said Nevin.

"Let's reconnoiter a bit. Let me take your gun, Nevin."

"For what?"

"I'm going to count the enemy myself," declared the thin boy, reaching for the fowling-piece. Nevin turned over the gun with evident relief on his part.

"Shall I wait here?" he asked.

"Yes. I'll not be long gone."

Keith stole silently from the spot. He well knew that his awkward friend was given to exaggeration, and that on an occasion like the present his fears were likely to add to the ranks of the enemy. He moved forward with caution, not caring to precipitate hostilities with the enemy. He had not proceeded far when the sound of voices fell on his ears.

Keith at once halted and dropped upon his knees. Creeping forward he soon came close upon the speakers without being discovered. Three men sat on a log, one of them smoking a short, black pipe. This man held a rifle idly across his knees, and seemed content to smoke and listen while his companions talked. Keith did not know the stranger; but two comrades were Dampers and Torchet. These latter were not visible.

Here was Nevin's army of twelve, as the listening lad soon learned from the remarks of the twain at one end of the log. No others were on the station. This was an agreeable surprise to Keith. With only three to contend with he felt hopeful of making good their escape.

"I wouldn't hunt no longer for them kids," said the man with the pipe, whose countenance was the least villainous of the three. "They skipped long afore this, you kin bet on that."

"Not likely," returned Dampers. "Sime and I have watched the bridge and Moll in the house about as the shallows. We can't afford to let them kids away; they know too much."

"What do they know?" grunted the smoker.

"The Kimberly boy stumbled upon a tray of new coin that Moll was careless enough to leave lay exposed."

"Yes," said Torchet, "Moll was keerless. But it don't knows I can blame her much. How shud she know the boys hid we a-comin' round, snoopin' inter other folks' business?"

"He was looking for his rifle."

"Mebbe so," said Torchet. "Moll was keerful that he shouldn't," chuckled the villain.

"I'm impressed ter say 'at the hull movement on yore part, gents, has been a mistake," said the smoker, removing his pipe and expectorating against the roots of a sapling. "Takin' the least bit likely that that are boy knew what that money was, he couldn't know 'twas bogus, and er I'd been runnin' the business I'd ha' chummed up w' the lad and sent him on his way. As 'tis now, we'll hev the officers arter us putty sudden, lest we desart the place altogether."

"What nonsense, Bangs," jeered Dampers. "We won't have to desert the island unless the boy's escape."

"What'll we do with 'em if they don't escape? We can't allus keep 'em locked up, Terry."

"True, but we can sink them in the swamp pool."

"Blink 'em? D'ye mean murder?"

"Nothing of the sort," returned Dampers with a low, chilling laugh.

"It's well you don't," declared Bangs. "I ain't no assassin, I kin tell you that; I may shove 'em down a hole, but you don't catch me roddenin' my hands with human blood, not by a jugful."

"Certainly not," retorted Dampers; "you are the pink of perfection, Dad Bangs. I suppose you'd even object to an accidental drowning. You'd rather take your medicine in the penitentiary. I'm not such a blamed chump as all that, and I reckon Sime stands with me."

"You're right there," agreed the islander.

Keith thought he had an opportunity to escape from the island provided these men remained where they were for a short time. Nevin had reached the island across the "shallows," and in that spot the water was not deep. It would be an easy matter to creep upon the female guard, overpower and disarm her, and then their escape through the water. The listening lad crawled noiselessly away and was soon with his friend again. He explained the situation to him in a few words.

"Only three with us, a woman on the island, Keith!" exclaimed the thin boy, in a tone that showed better than words that I saw at least ten, armed to the teeth."

"You are mistaken, Nevin," said Keith. "Overheard every word the fellows uttered, and from that I know there are but three men, and Moll; and one of the men—Bangs—objected to shedding blood. I think we'd better make a dash for liberty without delay."

Nevin consented to his friend's plan in part. The run for liberty was all right he agreed, but he thought it much better to go by way of the bridge over which Keith had passed that morning.

"Those fellows have an eye on the bridge you may be sure," objected Keith.

"Well, how long will it be before they begin searching the thickets, think you?" asked the thin boy. "I'm hungry and thirsty, too. Let's get where we can eat as quickly as possible."

They now began moving cautiously through the dense undergrowth. Neither spoke for some minutes. Keith had returned the gun to Nevin thus leaving himself unarmed. He longed to get his hands once more on his trusty rifle. He halted Nevin at length and made known his thoughts to him.

"That's all right," acquiesced the thin boy. "But it's food I want more than anything else just now. My stomach has caved in, and feels as flat as a pancake. I'm going to make a break for something to eat."

"Why, goodness, Nevin, I forgot," ejaculated Keith. "Here's something from Moll Torchet's larder."

Halting, the speaker thrust his hand into his pocket where he had put the corn pone and venison. The parcel was gone!

"What's that?" said Nevin, turning around.

"It's gone," groaned Keith, as he thrust his hand through a rip in the bottom of his pocket.

"What's gone?" demanded the lean boy.

"The bread and meat Mrs. Torchet gave me for you. There's a hole in my pocket I didn't know about. You'll have to wait till we get home before you eat, Nevin."

"I can't stand it till then."

"You'll have to, Nevin."

The roof of the island house loomed up before them at this moment. They had doubled on their track and were now very close to the little clearing. At the rear of the building the undergrowth grew within a few yards of the door. An idea took possession of the thin boy at sight of the house. Undoubtedly the men were all there, and was deserted.

"I want a victuals over yonder," said Nevin, "and I'm going to satisfy my hunger. You go 'round till this morning and don't care about me. I didn't eat much at old Dampers' table last night. If I go without much longer I shall collapse. Here, take this gun, it'll only be in the way. If I get into trouble, you can cover my retreat."

Thus speaking, the tall boy thrust his gun into the other's hands and before Keith could utter a remonstrance, glided away. The stout lad knew better than to attempt action on the part of Nevin, and would have called him back had he dared risk raising his voice.

Nevin Tetham was a rapidly growing boy, requiring more nourishment than most boys of his age. His stomach ruled him absolutely, and however timid he might be at other times, he would face almost any peril to gratify his appetite. Keith hastened in the footsteps of his lean friend and soon reached a spot where he could see the rear of the house. Not a soul was in sight. Presently Keith saw his friend dart across the open ground and disappear within the house.

The boy in the thicket awaited the outcome with hated breath. One—two—five minutes passed; then a startling sound fell on his ear.

This thrilling story of boyhood adventure will be continued next week.

A Monstrous Prospect.

If people never had complaints,
If no man ever frowned,
If no one ever had a grief,
If no one moped around,
If no one ever suffered for
Some other person's sins,
How sick we'd get of people and
Their "idiotic grins."

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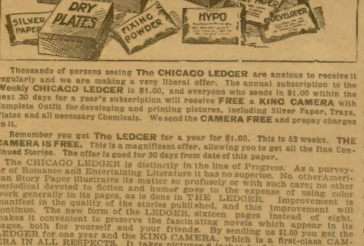

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The Bachelor Girls.

(Continued from page nine.)

coarse woman washing the steps of the mysterious house. No sooner did the woman see mamma and Alice than she ran indoors and slammed the door as hard as she could, and left the bucket of water, with its soft soap and brush, standing on the porch, but the following morning it was gone. We never could guess who or what the people were. Papa thought they might be counterfeiters, but I think they must have been hiding someone from the law or——

"Oh!" cried the girls in a breath, for a most unearthly wail, like a lost soul in anguish, came from the depths of the basement, followed by the sound of something falling.

"Oh, mercy me!" screamed the little stout girl, clutching frantically at the table to steady herself. "What could it have been?"

The tall blonde looked white in the gas light as she murmured, "It might have been the wind."

"Cats!" exclaimed the dark-browed girl, curling her red lips with fine scorn. Yet she did not laugh.

The bachelor girls sat in silence around the table, but as nothing more distressing was heard than the soft sobbing of the midnight wind as it swept around the house, they decided it must have been some echo of the house cats in the cellar trying to besiege a pitcher of cream, and once more picked up their courage.

"Did you ever find out who it was lived in the mysterious house?" softly whispered the little stout girl as though in fear of her own small voice.

"No," said the dark-browed girl, rising and crossing the room to the fireplace where she threw herself upon a low stool and began unlacing her shoes. "I'm going to bed."

And Mildred?" inquired the Titian-haired girl, removing her spectacles and slipping them carefully.

"Oh, she won't come. Her train was due over half an hour ago," carelessly replied the dark-browed girl.

"Let's go to our rooms," yawned the tall blonde. "We will leave the table. Mary will see to it in the morning. I wish that the housemaid of ours had some enough to stay at home tonight. What's the use of her with parties, anyway?"

"We would go to a party without men?" asked the Titian-haired girl in surprise.

"I won't sleep alone," said the little stout girl, as she followed the girls to their rooms. Large, airy rooms they were, opening one into another, with two beds in the largest one.

"Look out!" cried the dark Venus, throwing her shoes across the room. "Let's see who can get to bed first."

"I am sure to be last," cried the little stout girl, struggling with endless rows of hooks and eyes.

"Oh, I do hate to go to bed," cried the Titian-haired maid, dancing across the room in a cloud of misty white lace petticoats and a small pink satin jacket fitted very tightly about her trim waist, her white dimpled arms and neck gleaming through her waving hair.

The tall blonde threw on a loose dressing gown, scolded herself for being a simpleton and said, as she rubbed a quantity of cold cream into her nose: "Girls, I am serious. I really realize that we are absolutely alone in the house."

"Yes, I have been thinking of it all evening, but I was trying to forget it," faltered the little stout girl, sighing a wisp of hair in her mouth and nervously rolling her curl papers the wrong way.

"What a foolish way to talk," laughed the Titian-haired maid, as she sprang up to brush. "Watch me do that hairsprring we saw at the vaudeville last week. You girls will scare yourselves to death in the same way with a woman, father says. If you are afraid to be alone you will have to be bachelors. I'm not afraid of anything," she said, with a toss of her head as she prepared for the hairsprring.

"I wish you would shut my bedroom window," said the little stout girl, "and keep with me. I am afraid."

The Titian-haired girl disappeared for a moment, but soon returned white to the lips.

"Girls!" she cried, "there is a man trying to get into the house. He is standing under the window. Why did I ever join this club? I am going to faint!"

"Don't you dare faint in the house," commanded the tall blonde, shaking her until her teeth chattered, and you have your wits if you do."

A slight noise reminded the now terror-stricken girls there was no time to lose.

"Where are my shoes?" shrieked the dark-browed girl.

"And my waist?" sobbed the Titian-haired maid.

"Keep still," whispered the tall blonde. "They will all come in with a rush if we do."

The little stout girl crept toward the door, a strength of courage about her plump little shoulders and an old battered revolver in her shaking hand.

"Girls!" she gasped between her chattering teeth, "hurry up now and get dressed. I'll shoot the first man who dares to cross the threshold, and I'll k-k-k-kill him dead, if they come near me for it."

The girls shuddered. In a few minutes they were ready for the break for liberty.

"Now we are ready," cried the tall blonde, throwing open the door.

"Oh, oh!" was the only answer.

There was a mingling of swinging skirts, fluffy draperies and waving hair as the girls ran, flew or tumbled down the stairs, feeling much as Tam O'Shanter must have felt when pursued by the witches. The tall blonde reached the door first and flung it open; the Titian-haired girl passed her by, and with a wild scream rushed straight into the arms of a man. The girls shrieked, the man struggled to escape, but she of the Titian hair hung on like grim death, crying loudly: "Help! help!"

The little stout girl brought up the rear and cried in a wobbly voice. "Leave him to me, girls; leave him to me!" Pointing the handle of the revolver at him, she cried: "Now, tell us who you are and what you want!"

"Oh, please, miss," wailed the unhappy victim, "I am only the milkman and I can't find the milk jar. I didn't mean no harm."

"The milkman!" exclaimed the bachelor girls in a breath. "Why did you come at this hour of the morning?"

"Oh," said the man, "this is the first place I came to. Your man John forgot to leave a jar in the cellarway, and I couldn't find my way in the dark. I walked all over a flight of steps, and was here before," and he grinned horribly; men always hate cats.

"Well, girls," said the blonde, ordinarily "you can find the jar all right now, I guess, and see that you leave an extra quart for that cat you hurry."

"Come in, girls," said the dark-browed girl. "Let's get to bed. My head nearly hurts anybody with that revolver."

And the bachelor girls flocked back upstairs.

The Maelstrom.

(Continued from page eleven.)

"So much for the mystery," said my friend, as he gripped the brute by the neck and squeezed the life out of it. "This cap will suck no more blood anyway. By God! we are easily frightened, Ralston."

"Man born of woman is a shutterer before the sea," said I, "and a trembler in the dark. What would you have, Hal?" My straining ears had caught another sound. "Stop the light, Graham."

A door opened at the end of the room as I spoke. Hellings appeared in the aperture. "Come in the light, Graham."

"I heard the noise, Cap'n Gaskin," he said, "and was afraid that some spirit had gone out of me like out of a spiled cawsk of rum."

"Lummee!" says I, "I cawn't face that afternoon door, and I cawn't see the guy'-nor, and I cawn't see the guy'-nor's bloody room, an' if this ain't the final—Lummee!"

I followed hastily into a tastefully decorated room. Against the bulkhead, amidst the shadows, I saw the lights and dark hangings. The clothes were tossed back, partly disclosing the white-robed form of a woman.

It was Christobel, lying as though asleep. With one bare arm flung over her head above her head, and her left breast bare of covering. She looked beautiful enough to warrant even Hellings description; beautiful enough to turn the head of some men, and to draw the life-blood of others.

It was Christobel, lying as though asleep. With one bare arm flung over her head above her head, and her left breast bare of covering. She looked beautiful enough to warrant even Hellings description; beautiful enough to turn the head of some men, and to draw the life-blood of others.

Her head, white breast was fixed one of three slender Venetian daggers that spill no blood; and in her eyes we saw a look of mute difficult to describe, with the calm symmetry of her rounded limbs.

We drew a sheet over her body in search revealed a letter, written during the day, in Spanish, also several thin steel blades adjustable to the dagger hafts of the girls breast.

In an adjoining room the body of the captain was found; he, too, carried a similar thin steel blade broken off close in the breast. But the body of the mate was missing. Doubtless Bjornson and Christobel had passed him overboard in order to make their tale good to the crew when they returned.

So we went back to the room where the girl lay, and Gaskin gave me the letter.

"You know the lingo, Ralston. Read it," he said; "it may give some clew to all this misery."

I took the letter from him, and opened it, faltering. It ran thus:

"To the Ladies' Sagacious, who will be my judges. This my extenuation. Captain Hendricksen loved me. We met in my country, Brazil. I love him, too. He talk me marriage with him in Hegal for him of Norway. He promises to marry me at home. Bosun, I come with him. I am a fool, but I loving Matador, my pet, with me. He is tame. He will do my bidding. The captain give me a phial for use. I go home to Bergen. The Captain is at home, but he does not marry me. I am a cow. I hate. He is playing with me. I, too, play with him. I'm afraid of him in my own country. I time the ship which was his, to mine on his death. Behold, Senores, I ingest the phial of poison with his. It is the truth. So time draws on; we come to Hispaniola. I am sick. I am sick for whom you call Bjornson, but whom I name after his race, whose mother gave me the clothes I wear. No other is possible. I kiss his feet; amigo mio, there is no other. I am sick for Bjornson. I am sick; oh, that the past could pass, and he and I stand upon Hispaniola. I am sick for him, for his wife—his slave! But it is gone. All ills, all sins, all pain is past. Adios! El Diosa Madre di Dios."

There was a blank space here, and the page was blotted with tears—tears Christobel had evidently tried to erase. Then she resumed with: "I read in a book. I could with difficulty control:

"Ah, but I plead in my extenuation, not my apology. The Captian trod me in the dirt. With the help of my pet Matador. Dios! He escaped! He had grown accustomed to me. He attacked Carlos, my husband, as I slept. When I awoke, with the help of my pet Matador, he lay dead in terror, for it was all secret, hidden from him, and I was alone with Matador. He was tame. Then, white with the Pilote fastened me here. There is Senores, no more. I am a cow. I am sick for Carlos; to him I go. Senores, buenos noches. I am sick."

I sat long in the darkened room after the others left to go on deck, thinking, brooding over the possibilities that cross a man's path; of the heights of which we are capable, and despite Christobel's fault, and all in pursuit of that old blind passion we dignify with the name of love. The night grew on apace. Steamers wailing in the darkness passed up the river. Now and then a breeze under sail approached the port, and the thunder of her canvas sounded in the night. The tide had turned. Dismal came back with the launch and the preparatives of the law. There was nothing else to be done. So we returned to the Virginia and steamed slowly home, leaving Hellings where we had found him

Tender Memory.

Tommy—Mamma, why have you got papa's hair in a locket?

His Mother—To remind me that he once had some, Tommy.

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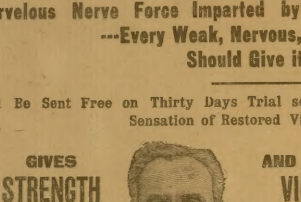

PROF. A. CHESTER.

A well known professor has made the fortunate discovery that what has heretofore been known as impotency or lost manhood is due to paralysis of the nerves. As it requires a vigorous condition of the nerves to control the muscles, the professor has found a wonderful power, that instantly awakens the nerves and thus restores complete muscular strength. He says: "The marvelous results exerted by recent additions and improvements to my electric belt and appliances induces me to send it on a thirty days free trial so certain am I that it will cure and that the wearer will gladly pay the small price asked after the 30 days trial.

To men who have battered their stomachs with drugs I want them to exercise their imagination and consider that electricity is the greatest power on earth. Its unseen currents fill life and force into whatever it touches. The constant, steady life extended by my new belt will restore vitality and strength and will never fail to cure Rheumatism, Backache, Kidney Troubles, Lame Back, Nervousness, Lack of Nerve Force and Vigor, Nervous Debility, Undeveloped and Lost Vitality. You may not have faith in it now, but wear it for 30 days and you will have faith in it. I have such confidence in it as to send it to you on trial.

I receive the most wonderful testimonials for my belt. Here is one from Mr. C. Berry Station, Westmoreland Co., Pa., who says: "Your belt is doing wonders. That soul deprived him of happiness. His nerves were in a bad condition of weakness, but in three days after putting on the belt and suspensory he felt wonderfully improved and now has the full strength and vigor of every member of the body."

Geo. A. Johnson, Box 113, Painted Post, N. Y., says that while he never practiced excess except when young he found himself at 40 a premature old man. But the belt and suspensory have completely restored him.

A. V. Sherman, Box 1, Clifton, W. Va., says he spent hundreds of dollars in medicines and the old style electric belts, but was disappointed but received no benefit. Although 65 years old and for three years suffering from lost manhood my belt cured him quickly and well and I am again young and vigorous.

Jas. Baldwin of Shrubrun, Pa., says my belt and suspensory for unhealthy organs and enfeebled self have restored great strength and health.

A gentleman of high standing financially and socially, who wished me not to use his name except to those who write me in a serious as at S. Was confronted with seminal weakness for many years and as an added injustice I must say your belt and suspensory have restored my lost manhood and vigor.

He says he will gladly answer all inquiries. His address is 1 D. O. Box 68, Jackson, Mich.

John R. Burdsley of Gunnison, Col., says the belt I sent him has entirely cured him and he will gladly explain what his treatment was if any inquiries are made as he is very much enthused by his recovery.

Chas. A. Reading, Ia., says the belt saved his life and he will gladly tell other sufferers what it has done.

Thousands of others write in the same strain. If you have not the money I will authorize to write to any of these gentlemen please enclose stamp for reply.

Do not fail to write at once to Prof. A. Chester, Box 1, Cor. Fort and Griswold Sts., Detroit, Mich., as he is anxious to have every man who reads this offer wear the belt and suspensory for 30 days and try it fully before paying him a cent. He is perfectly willing to prove by the belt a fact trial if you are not perfectly satisfied with it, he wants you nothing to try it.

Write today before you forget it.

Queer Things That Happen

A 118-acre burial ground for animals and birds has been established at Cedar Knoll, N. Y.

Falling face downward into a washtub of water in Sacramento, Cal., baby was drowned.

Spreading resulting in blood poisoning caused the death of Louis H. Forbes of Cincinnati.

Three robbers got in the pipes of a Bournemouth church organ and played "Yankee Doodle."

R. Sherrill of Peoria, Cal., sat on a can of powder and touched a cigaret. He is dead now.

Aged sixteen years Harry Frei, an albuminous boy, turned up in Knoxville, and was found Frei indeed.

Eleven years after buried the body of a Niagara woman was disinterred and found to have been petrified.

As Goliath was slain, so was S. H. Rubbins of Newport, Ky., killed, a man killed by a pebble from a small boy's sling.

Mrs. Lucinda Pratt of Lowell, Mass. convicted of breaking his 12-year-old daughter's thigh. Sentenced she got a pardon.

In Indiana, the other day a man tried to thaw a can of nitroglycerine by placing it in a stove. He succeeded, but hasn't found it out yet.

Probably Not.

Old Mr. Williams was subject to fits of what he called "righteous anger," slight provocation, and in such times, as he was naturally talkative, his tongue often ran away with him.

"There's Square Peters' son," he roared to his gentle brother one day, "actually lettin' his written books about furrin lands stid o' stayin' to hum with his wife. Why, Square showed me one o' his books t' other day—all about Spain 'twas; bound in red leather, an' filled with pictures—pictures—'Edition de luxe,' the square called it; an' I reckon that name looks mighty loose in it, true enough."

"I say that 'tis," concluded Mr. Williams, roaring still louder as his wife remained silent; "I ain't got no patience with books about furrin lands stid o' stayin' to hum with my wife. Why, Square showed me one o' his books t' other day—all about Spain 'twas; bound in red leather, an' filled with pictures—'Edition de looks,' the square called it; an' I reckon that name looks mighty loose in it, true enough."

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Good Medical Advice.

The acid of cranberries is good for the system, especially when a person has malaria. Cranberry poultices should be applied for erysipelas.

Try sun bath for rheumatism.

Try a clam broth for a weak stomach.

Eat an abundance of onions and horseradish to relieve dropsical swellings.

Lemon milk will remove freckles, tan and buttermilk stains.

Take a nap in the afternoon if you are going to be out late in the evening.

Try breathing the fumes of turpentine or carbolic acid to relieve whooping cough.

How He Has It.

"Jones is a man with plenty of push."

"I've never seen him do anything to prove it."

"You ought to get up early enough some morning to see him behind the lawnmower."

HOME AND TABLE.

New Frills and Fancies.

Dame Fashion is in a delightful flutter. The shops display a bewildering assortment of fascinating trifles, and the all important and intensely interesting choice of the spring and summer outfit is now the order of the day.

Each spring the dainty accessories of a woman's toilet seem more and more alluring.

"Never before," say all the fair shoppers, "have such absolutely irresistible temptations in the way of dress been offered to the guileless and easily vanquished woman who is simply 'looking' at the things in the shops."

A wonderful assortment of parasols is exhibited. Every color and variety in shape is to be found. The walks and counters blossom as though with huge mushrooms and fungi.

A dainty-looking sunshade is of royal blue corded silk, lined with white of the same popular shade. The silk is cut in deep scallops between the ribs of the frame, and the trimming consists of three narrow rows of lace.

Parasols to match the costumes are much in vogue. In corded material for a gown an extra amount is allowed for the parasol. This is made up in the store for a moderate price.

No woman can resist the exquisite stockings displayed. Royal purple is the color of the moment, and a dainty silk hose of this brilliant hue with delicate open work insteps are most attractive when worn with slippers of low shoes. Another pair of stockings of the same royal shade are decorated with alternate stripes of black and white lace open work.

A secret breathed in the boudoirs is that stockings this year must have longitudinal stripes, as they tend to make the ankles look smaller. Horizontal lines hitherto worn. A pretty stocking is of black lisle thread with vertical stripes in Roman colors.

A "key" effect called the "Mascot" is gained by stocking with a plain red silk upper half and a black lower.

Much will be worn this year in the way of jewelry.

A new fad is to wear a steel necklace fitting closely about the collar of street gowns. Steel buckles and belts of elaborate pattern are also seen.

Crush ribbon belts with broad buckle ornaments both at the front and back of the waist are popular.

Long necklaces of real jewels and also pretty ones of colored glass are seen dangling from the necks of most women of fashion. Various excuses are made for this unusual decoration for the street. Sometimes the beads are attached to a bunch of keys. A lorgnette, or a metal purse, and sometimes even a bunch of violets is found at one end of the long chain.

Pins for the hair come in various designs. A four-leaved clover is a pretty fancy for this coming season.

Combs of women, six deep, surround the coiffure of a newcomer. No girl could fail to look pert in some of the enticing concoctions displayed.

Small tailor article and one with a smart effect is a high rolling collar and revers of the foundation edged with narrow silk braid. This collar can be worn with any coat and gives a certain style to the plainest of garments. The collar can also be had in white pique and in silk.

A pretty arrangement for the neck is a collar and fluffy bow of white chiffon dotted with black velvet. The ends of the bow are trimmed with insertions and edging of lace. Many jaunty little bows have sharply pointed ends, edged with narrow lace.

Low shoes are almost universally worn for the summer. A tan shoe of soft calf, with round bulldog toe and flat heel, is much liked. The heavy sole and extended beyond the shoe to a truly masculine degree.

A similar shoe with a thin sole is worn for the bicycle.

A pretty little boot for street wear is made with a patent leather lower and calf upper. The toe is round, sole moderately heavy, and extended.

For dancing and house wear, however, the fascinating Louis Quinze heel and more pointed toe are still in evidence.

An Oriental Corner.

One of the many novel ways of putting prettiness into the home is to fit up some especial corner of the house in Oriental fashion. It does not much matter which room is chosen for this purpose. The quaint little nook may be in the back parlor, or it may furnish a delightful lounging place in the daintiest of the bedrooms. An Oriental corner in the library suggests at once a happy half hour of half dreamy reverie with thoughts and favorite books for company. Fitting up such a place is not difficult. A little money, a little energy, and the artistic sense are the requisites. A few Turkish rugs, a chaise-shaped lounge, draperies and hangings of any of the many inexpensive Oriental fabrics, some cozy heaps of soft pillows, and, if procurable, an antique piece of some sort to fill in the background, make up an Oriental corner which will delight your every guest with its oddity and its convenience and will maybe excite envy in your neighbor's.

To Cure Freckles.

An excellent freckle lotion which is used a great deal in France is made of six ounces of rosewater, half an ounce of glycerine, one and a half drachms of cherry laurel water, two and a half drachms of powdered borax, and one drachm of each half drachms of finely powdered borax. Shake the mixture well before applying. This will also whiten the skin.

Pretty Way of Folding Napkins.

A design called the "water lily" is very pretty to follow if one is folding napkins.

FIG. I.

FIG. II.

FIG. III.

FIG. IV.

FIG. V.

FIG. VI.

FIG. VII.

To begin with, it is unlike that beautiful flower, but it is easily understood, is fairly flat.

Open out the napkin and see that it is perfectly square, for if not no good result can be obtained. It is also important that the napkin be very stiff, otherwise it will flop and take a lot of room on the table instead of standing.

Commence by folding all four corners to the center as in Fig. I, which shows the original square, and dotted lines show the position of the corners after folding. Letter the angles of the set A, B, C and D. Again fold these four corners E, F, G and H to the center, as shown in Fig. II. The dotted lines in Fig. II. merely show the position of the edges underneath.

Fig. III. is a representation of the napkin at the same stage, but without the dotted lines, so is perhaps less confusing. Now turn the napkin over, no handling it that is necessary, and behold, becoming disarranged, Fig. IV. Now the effect this it will be found necessary to shake a finger on each hand, one on the upper and one on the under side of the corner. Fold the four corners, I, J, K and L, E, F, G, H to the center, in the position indicated by the dotted lines. Having done this, your napkin should appear as per Fig. V. Now place the forefinger of your left hand in the center of the napkin, as indicated for a point in a straight line with point N (Fig. VI.) and the center. With the thumb and forefinger of the right hand pull this out sharply in an upward direction. Keeping a firm hold of the centre, as previously directed, that the whole napkin may become unfolded. Feel underneath again for three other points, between corners X, Y, and the center of the napkin all the while.

You have now four points pulled out, each similar to N on Fig. VI. Still keep a firm hold of the center and again feel underneath with the right hand, and you will find four other points, which should be pulled outward and upward, and when in position will be found to be alternate with the first four points pulled out. Fig. VII. shows you how your napkin will look when this has been done and a small tumbler has been placed in the center.

FIG. VIII.

This mode of folding is so straightforward that it is really impossible to handle the napkin wrongly, but it will be found that unless it is well-starched it will not be used the water lily" effect at all, and unlike the beautiful flower it represents, it will not keep, but like in shape and fitting closely round the tumbler placed in the center.

How to Boil Fish.

Simple as broiling seems, it is really difficult, and is more often done badly than otherwise. To insure having it right it should not be left haphazard, but should be timed according to the thickness. With a bright, hot fire, such as you should always have for broiling, in twelve minutes you can cook a fish that is an inch thick. If it is two inches thick give it twenty minutes. If the fire is dull the fish will require a longer time, and will, very likely, not be so good. The fish should be seasoned with salt and pepper before it is cooked. If it is one on which the skin is left it should be broiled with the skin side away from the fire until it has only five minutes longer in which to cook, when it may be turned; but it must be watched closely to see that it does not burn.

People who live in or near seaboard towns have no trouble in obtaining a variety of fish, and usually nearly every inland place has its own particular species, which should have preference over other kinds. A rich fish satiates much sooner than a lighter kind, and for this reason it is well not to have the former variety too often. The standard fish, those that are in most frequent use, are known as whitefish, and include halibut, cod, haddock, cusk, swordfish, and flounders. The choicer varieties are the bluefish salmon, and mackerel.

The fish that are broiled are mackerel, whitefish, small haddock and cod. Split to bake, trout or any other thin fish; also mackerel and whitefish. Before the entire fish is broiled it should be split down the back, and the backbone, tail and fins removed. The general rule for broiling has already been given above, but will be repeated. After it is cooked season with butter, salt, white pepper, and lemon juice.

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We give every reader of this paper the choice of any two rings shown in this advertisement absolutely free. Write for description of the rings. Ring No. 1 is a massive ring set with a beautiful genuine diamond, 4 carat in size. It is cut in genuine Tiffany style, right closet to hand shown. The ring is a beauty. Ring No. 2 is a massive ring set with a large genuine diamond, 4 carat in size, and two rubies, one on each side of the diamond. Ring No. 3 has two rubies and two emeralds, each stone about 4 carat in size, and a genuine diamond in the center. This is a very handsome ring. Ring No. 4 is set with a genuine diamond, 4 carat in size, and two genuine sapphires, one on each side. Ring No. 5 is set with a genuine diamond in the center as shown in the engraving, the whole setting is what is called Tiffany row engraved. Ring No. 6 is set with a genuine diamond, 4 carat in size, and two genuine rubies, one on each side of the diamond. This is a very handsome ring. Ring No. 7 is a solid gold ladies' ring, set with a genuine diamond in center and four ruby stones, one on each side of the diamond.

We give the above rings absolutely free to introduce our publication, BOYCES MONTHLY. It is not a boys' subscription to BOYCES MONTHLY, and we will not send it unless you send in it cents extra in order to advertise our publication. It is a high class family publication, and after a year you will continue for it is filled with the best and most fascinating literature, money, time and interest. Contains 32 large pages, handsomely illustrated. Every number contains a complete novel, besides short stories, adventures, travel, discovery, humorous stories, and the best current events of the world's greatest writers. We will introduce BOYCES MONTHLY in every home and therefore make the most liberal offers ever presented to the readers of any paper. Send us 10 cents at once, stating name of paper you saw this advertisement and state exactly which of the two rings you want. On receipt of your letter, we will enter your subscription for a year and send the rings postpaid. If you are already a subscriber state the fact, and the subscription will be extended one year. Address all orders to

BOYCES MONTHLY, RING DEPARTMENT. BOYCE BLDG., CHICAGO.
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MANLY VIGOR---NO DRUGS

(Copyrighted.)

When I started out 30 years ago as a young doctor in treating weak men, I gave drugs. I didn't know any better. But when I found there was really so little reliance to be placed in medical treatment, I commenced to cast about for other remedies.

One time I experimented with the galvanic current of electricity, and from that to the present day—25 years—I have not written a prescription for weak men. I have demonstrated the fact that a general treatment is required to gain lost strength, because weak troubles come on slowly and involve not alone the nervous system and glands, but the Heart, Stomach, Kidneys, Liver, Bladder, &c.

Electricity, I found, comes up to the requirements of a general treatment, because Electricity is strength or nerve force, and it supplied the system with this lacking element; it built up slowly but surely the whole organism without the least stimulation, without a particle of danger. In the beginning, I gave a battery treatment, but I soon found that a home self-application was needed. I know then that a portable battery was required, one which would give plenty of electricity and at the same time be light and convenient. This led me to invent a chain of cells which was worn around the patient's waist.

That first chain of cells was the beginning of what has developed into my 1899 model, Dr. Sanden

ELECTRIC BELT

with suspensory, the great treatment for weak men. Now known the world over.

Last year I restored 5,000 to strength who suffered from the results of youthful errors or later excesses, having had Losses, Nervous Debility, Lame Back, Impotency, Varicocele, &c.

Currents instantly felt, but under perfect control of wearer, simply turn regulator screw to make mild or strong. Put it on at night when going to bed, and take it off next morning. Keep this up 6 to 90 days. That will be time enough for vigor. If in or near these cities call, consult and examine free of charge or write for

FREE BOOK

"Three Classes of men," which explains all and is sent free by mail in plain sealed envelope. All correspondence given faithful attention.

DR. B. W. SANDEN, 826 Broadway, New York, N. Y.,
or 183 S. CLARK STREET, CHICAGO, ILL.
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INSOMNIA

"I have been using CASCARETS for Insomnia, with which I have been afflicted for over twenty years, and I can say that Cascarets have given me more relief than any other remedy I have ever tried. I shall certainly recommend them to my friends as being all they are represented." THOS. GILLARD, Joplin, Mo.

CANDY CATHARTIC

Cascarets

TRADE MARK REGISTERED

REGULATE THE LIVER

Pleasant. Palatable. Potent. Taste Good. Do Good. Never Sicken, Weaken, or Gripe. 10c. 25c. 50c.

CURE CONSTIPATION.

Sterling Remedy Company, Chicago, Montreal, New York. 316

FOR YOUTHFUL EYES.

WHEN PAPA'S SICK.

By Joe Lincoln.

When papa's sick, my goodness sakes!
Such awful, awful times it makes.
He speaks in oh! such lonesome tones,
And gives such ghastly kind of groans,
And rolls his eyes and holds his head,
And makes me help him up to bed.
While Sis and Bridget run to heat
Hot water bags to warm his feet,
And I must get the doctor quick.
We have to jump when papa's sick.

When papa's sick ma has to stand
Right side the bed and hold his hand,
While Sis she has to fan an' fan
For he says he's "a dyin' man."
And wants the children round him to
And growls and scolds from ten pete throughout
And kiss us all then he'll die.
Then moans and says his breathin's thick"—
It's awful sad when papa's sick.

When papa's sick he acts that way
Until he hears the doctor say
"You've only got a cold, you know.
You'll be all right's to day or so."
And then—well, sir! you ought to see.
He's different as a man can be.
And growls and scolds from noon to night
Just 'cause his dinner ain't cooked right.
And all he does is fuss and fume
We're all used up when papa's sick.

THE EXPLANATION.

"Mamie, wot's yer little brother doin' with glasses on?"

"We are goin' to send him to Boston, an' ma wants to get Willie used to 'em, so he can look intellectual without strainin' his face."

Mr. Depew's Dog Story.

Chauncey M. Depew writes Eli Perkins, likes to tell jokes on himself. It is always a glorious level-headed man who will tell jokes on himself. One day I called on the great railroad president, and he sent out word that he could see no one, even on business, that day. I told the boy to tell Mr. Depew that I hadn't any business at all, only a new joke. "All right, Eli," said Mr. Depew, laughing through the door, "come right in."

"But, first," said he, "let me tell you my dog story."

When I was about fourteen years old my father lived on the old farm up at Poughkeepsie. One day after I had finished a five-acre field of corn, my father let me go to town to see a circus. While in town I, for the first time, saw a mechanical conch dog for sale. I bought and I bought it and took it home. When father say it, his good old Puritan face fell.

"Why Chauncey," he said sadly, "we don't want any spotted dogs on the farm, he'll drive the cattle crazy."

"No he won't, father" said Chauncey, proudly. "He's a blooded dog."

"The next day," said Mr. Depew, "it was raining, and I took the dog out into the woods to try him on a coon, but the rain was too much for him. It washed the spots off. That night I took the dog back to the dog dealer, with a long face, said I, 'Look at that dog! the spots have all washed off.'

"'Great guns, boy!' exclaimed the dog dealer, 'there was an umbrella which went with that dog. Didn't you get the umbrella?'"

Big Whale.

The whale has many enemies besides man, but the worst of these are the swordfish and the thresher. These always fight the whale together, the swordfish from beneath, stabbing the great creature again and again with his sharp sword, which in sometimes twice as long as a man, and the thresher, staying on top of the water and pounding the poor whale with his strong flipper. Which is like a great jog of wood until at last the biggest fish in the ocean is killed by these two hard fighters who are also dodgers, and get out of the way of the mighty tail and huge jaws, never being scared by the loud bellowing of the big fish.

Thus the swordfish and the thresher have a feast, and the sleeper shark, too, slips up from behind and steals a big bite. The shark is a coward, and is always laying in wait for a dinner which some one else has earned.

Just a Cork.

There are many queer things to be seen at sea, but one of the queerest of these was a little fish that two sailors caught not long ago. The fish had sharp spines on its back, and in some way or other it and stuck one of these into a big cork, which had floated, and with all the little fish could do it could not draw the cork under water and keep it there. At last it gave up trying and let the big cork float it around on top of the water, and one of the sailors reached out and caught it with his hands.

Feeding the Elephants.

Elephants in the Indian army are fed twice a day. When mealtime arrives, they are drawn up in line before a row of piles of food. Each animal's breakfast includes ten pounds of raw rice, done up in five two pound packages. The rice is wrapped up in leaves and then tied with grass.

Cheap at That.

Young Girl—What! I shall only have one husband all my life?

Gipsy Woman—Well, what can you expect for a quarter, miss?

Tailor Made Suit $4.98

Silk Lined Jacket.

ALL WOOL MATERIAL

Jacket elegantly silk lined, extra tailor made, fancy Italian cloth, Skirt full sweep, velvet bound, percaline lined, every seam taped, Both Jacket and Skirt are made in the latest style. Choice of electric blue, navy blue or black color.

SEND NO MONEY but send us your name and address and we will send you the suit C. O. D. subject to examination. When you receive it examine it, and if you find it equal to any suit you can buy at retail for $10.00, then pay the express agent $4.98 and express charges and consider it your own.

THE SUIT is made to order from fine cloth, in the latest style, and is equal to any suit you can buy at retail for $10.00. Don't buy a suit of clothes before you send for our Big Free Bargain Catalogue of other Rich, Stylish Goods, Jewelry, etc.

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FITS Cured by Dr. Kline's Great Nerve Restorer. Free $2 trial bottle and treatise. Send to DR. KLINE, 931 Arch St., Phila., Pa.

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"ALL COONS LOOK ALIKE TO ME" but Coon Chocolate Drops are not. Ask your dealer for them.

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HANDSOME MUSTACHE OR LOVELY HAIR produced in 30 days by "Mexican Mustache Grower." Never fails. Sent by mail, 50c. Illustrated book free. Write at once. Address Agent Dept. 4, Box 3333, Boston, Mass.

When Writing Mention Chicago Ledger.

OPIUM MORPHINE Cured at home. Book of particulars sent FREE. DR. J. C. HOFFMAN, Box 3, La Porte, Ind.

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THE HAIR TELLS ALL

IF SICK send a lock of your hair, state age, sex and 4 cents in stamps and I will diagnose your case FREE and tell you how to get well. PROF. O. PHILLIPS BRAGG, M.D., 24 E. HATTERAS, Box 4, Grand Haven, Mich.

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FISH BITE

If you can the celebrated Yukon Compound. Hundreds of testimonials. You can only send 25 cents for a box. Address ATLANTA MEDICINE CO., Box 1, Atlanta, Ga.

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PRINTING OUTFIT, 10c

We have sold 2 million Boy's Printer for 10c., postpaid and a specimen of our 3,000 Outfit Catalogue. Has 3 A. Font of Type, Type Holder, Ink Pad, Tweezers, Rule, Brush, Leads, Cases, Etc. Prints 3 Lines. Each Outfit in Box. Prints 3 A. Font of Type, Type Holder, Ink Pad, Tweezers, Rule, Brush, Leads, Cases, Etc. Prints 3 Lines. Each Outfit in Box. Prints 3 A. Font with figures, cuts and &c. Both Outfits Post Paid. Send for catalogue and Sets figures like Each. Also Alphabet Outfits. Agents Wanted. Write for terms. Address, THE ELECTRIC PRINTING CO., Box 7, E. V. G. ESSEXVILLE, MICH. (47 Cortland St., Dept. No. 7, N. Y.

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Games and Wonder Book FREE

We send a package of games and a wonder book free to any lady sending 10 cents for a 3 months subscription to Yes Yes. The games consist of charades, authors, fox and geese, nine men, Morris spanish prison, etc. The wonder book has tricks, puzzles, charades and other interesting matter. Remember we send the games and book free to all who subscribe for Yes Yes. It takes months for 10c. Address THE STAR, Oak Park, Ill.

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The Great Secret Writing System

FOR LOVERS AND OTHERS.

Every lover and everyone who writes letters should have a Weto Graph. It is a means of secret writing for correspondence, etc. If you have a Weto Graph you can preserve letters, notes, memoranda, addresses, or information you do not wish to be read by others, and can write to your friends in secret and no one can read what you have written. Look at the picture of a Weto Graph. Don't miss it. Send 10 cents and we will send the Weto Graph, with full instructions, prepaid.

FERN PUBLISHING CO., PARNASSUS, PA.

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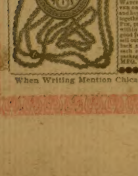

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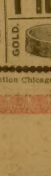
Diamond Pin.



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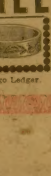

From Your Own Packet

BOYS, GIRLS AND LADIES, send me your full address and I will send you 50 packets of Flower Seeds to distribute among your friends at 10 cents each. When sold send me the money and I will send you a Ring, Watch, Chain, Locket, Silverware, Dishes, Sewing Machine, Organ, Gold Watch or anything you want in my large premium list. Send me no money but write for the seeds and they will be sent you at once. Address, ROYAL SEED CO., Box 1, Augusta, Maine.

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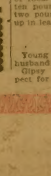
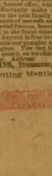
FREE RING AND BRACELET.





WIFE, GIRLS and LADIES, send us your full address and we will send you 24 packages of PERFUME, to sell among friends at 10 cents each. When sold, send us the money and we will send you a Ring, Bracelet, Watch, Chain, Locket, Silverware, Dishes, Sewing Machine, Organ, Gold Watch or anything you want in our large premium list. Send no money but write for the perfume and they will be sent you at once. Address, PERFUME CO., Drawer 1, BRIDGEWATER, CONN.

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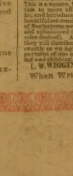

Woman Made BEAUTIFUL by TETTRO. Develops the bust 5 inches, fills out hollows, and gives a perfect beauty to the form, neck and arms. Sent by mail, sealed, for 50c. Send for circular. Tettro, the world-renowned expert figure and complexion specialist, 378 Fifth Ave., New York. Tettro's Face Powder, 25c. Tettro's Hair Tonic, 50c. Tettro's Tooth Powder, 25c. Tettro's Depilatory, 50c. Tettro's Pimple Cure, 50c. Tettro's Freckle Cure, 50c. Tettro's Wrinkle Cure, 50c. Tettro's Hair Dye, 50c. Tettro's Face Bleach, 50c. Tettro's Face Bleach, 50c. Tettro's Face Bleach